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CHINA DAILY

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Facing off over Trump



A supporter (left) of former US president Donald Trump and an anti-Trump demonstrator argue near the Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. United States Courthouse, on Tuesday before Trump appeared at his arraignment on classified document charges, in Miami, Florida. MARCO BELLO / REUTERS
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Washington urged to be sincere in rejoining UNESCO

By EARLE GALE in London
and MO JINGXI
and ZHAO RUINAN in Beijing

China has called on the United States to shoulder its responsibilities and pay its arrears to UNESCO after Washington's plan to rejoin the United Nations' cultural and scientific agency was announced on Monday.

Inside the US decision is made out of a sense of responsibility and aimed at supporting multilateralism and contributing to international cooperation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a news conference on Tuesday.

Noting that Washington's withdrawals on two occasions from the body have had a negative impact on the organization's work, Wang said, "Membership of an international organization is something that should be taken seriously. If the US is serious about what it

means to rejoin the organization, it needs to show the sincerity of observing international rules and respecting international rule of law, and earnestly fulfill its due international obligation as a responsible nation," he added.

The return of the US is expected to be discussed and voted on by UNESCO's 193 member states next month. UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay told member states about the US' application on Monday. UNESCO said Washington has agreed to pay more than \$600 million in contributions it would have made, had it not left.

Yang Jin, China's ambassador to the organization, said that UNESCO needs every member state to join hands in fulfilling the organization's missions.

Yang said that the US should also fulfill its international obligations as a responsible country, which includes paying contributions owed to UNESCO in full as soon as possible. It has been reported that the US

had asked to rejoin over so-called fears that China had filled the gap in UNESCO policymaking created when then-US president Donald Trump took his country out in 2017, purportedly because of political bias in the Middle East.

Sourabh Gupta, a senior Asia-Pacific international relations policy specialist at the Washington-based Institute for China-America Studies, told China Daily that the US seems to want to rejoin "for all the wrong reasons," with it seemingly eager to take its "no-holds-barred" rivalry with China into another arena.

"Of course, the US will mostly fail to achieve this ambition because the vast majority of countries are not interested, or invested, in this zero-sum game, and would much prefer that the US works constructively with China within the framework of UNESCO."

Li Haidong, a professor at the Institute of International Relations at China Foreign Affairs University, said the US has appeared arbitrary in withdrawing from

international organizations and then seeking to rejoin.

"It seems that whenever it suits Washington's agenda to promote its so-called democracy and human rights protection, they emphasize their membership, but as soon as it becomes unnecessary, they swiftly dismiss it," Li said.

Xu Liping, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' National Institute of International Strategy, said that the US also hopes to repair its "tarnished international image."

"It is worth noting that UNESCO holds considerable global influence, and the irony of withdrawing from such an organization that upholds values of freedom and respect for human rights, which the United States claims to champion, is not lost," Xu said.

Zhang Wanyin in London contributed to this story.

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Palestinian president's visit set to boost ties

China's commitment to international justice, peaceful role seen behind foreign leaders' trips

By ZHANG YUNBI
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Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas arrived in Beijing on Tuesday morning to start his four-day state visit, becoming the first Arab head of state hosted by China this year.

Following the arrival of Honduran President Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento on Friday, Abbas is the second foreign head of state to visit China this week.

Scholars said that behind the large number of foreign leaders visiting China one after another is the country's decadeslong, unchanged commitment to international justice and its constructive, peaceful role in tackling hot spot issues such as that of Palestine.

China was one of the first countries to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Palestine.

"Beijing is ready to work with Palestine to take the China-Palestine traditional friendly ties to a new height," Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said last week.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

When meeting with Abbas in Palestine on June 5, Zeng Jixi, head of the Office of the People's Republic of China to the State of Palestine, relayed President Xi Jinping's greetings and noted that the two-way ties have achieved high-level development under the strategic

navigation of the two heads of state. China is ready to work with Palestine to further fulfill the consensus reached by the two heads of state and "advance cooperation in various fields", he added.

Abbas spoke highly of President Xi's initiatives and propositions on behalf of China for promoting the settlement of the Palestine issue, and he said he appreciates China's consistent and staunch support for the just cause of the Palestinian people.

In 2019, China and Palestine launched the first round of negotiations on a free trade zone. Bilateral trade reached \$158 million last year, a year-on-year increase of 23.2 percent.

Li Shaoxian, director of Ningxia University's China-Arab Research Institute, said, "Abbas' China visit will focus on two fronts — promoting the Palestine-Israel peace process and helping Palestine deal with its economic difficulties."

Regarding the Palestine issue, Li noted that the mediation role played by Washington has shrunk in recent years, because "the United States is losing its unilateral command over the Middle East situation, and countries in the region such as Iran and Saudi Arabia have projected a rising sense of autonomy and self-reliance."

In contrast, "China is a friend to both Palestine and Israel, so it can exert influence upon both sides while remaining impartial and objective", he said.

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Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas arrives on Tuesday at Beijing Capital International Airport for a four-day state visit to China. He made four previous state visits to China since May 2005.

ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

PEAK PERFORMERS SET THEIR SIGHTS HIGH

Snow-clad mountains attract rising numbers of young climbers

By WANG SONGSONG
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Twelve years ago, Xu Jianglei, the first person from Hunan province to climb Qomolangma, known in the West as Mount Everest, took his young daughter Xu Zhuoyuan to the Siguniang Mountain scenic spot in Sichuan province.

In-depth

"My daughter did not experience any altitude sickness in the mountains — a decided advantage for climbers," he said.

Xu Zhuoyuan, now 16, has since made full use of this advantage.

On May 15, she scaled Qomolangma's west face from Nepal to become the youngest Chinese female to climb the world's highest mountain.

When she was 12, she had said on a television variety show that she would conquer Qomolangma one day. Her father was shocked at the idea.

"Mountaineering is an extreme

sport. I thought at the time how could such an inexperienced girl accomplish this task," he said. "But I later considered that as she had this idea, I should make plans to help her train for the attempt."

These plans resulted in Xu Zhuoyuan swimming and running a great deal.

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INSIDE
New travel routes to bring more
tourists to cultural heritage sites
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Unbelievable hypocrisy seen in Five Eyes statement

The Five Eyes nations — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States — as well as Japan, in their "Joint Declaration Against Trade-Related Economic Coercion and Non-Market Policies and Practices" issued on June 9, did not name any specific country, but it was obvious that the target was China.

The statement slashed what it described as "trade-related economic coercion" and nonmarket policies and practices "that undermine the functioning of and confidence in the rules-based multilateral trading system by distorting trade, investment and competition and harming relations between countries". It also referred to "the threat of measures affecting

WORLD WATCH
By Tom Fowdy

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trade and investment in an abusive, arbitrary, or pretextual manner to pressure, induce or influence a foreign government into taking, or not taking, a decision or action in order to achieve a strategic political or policy objective, or prevent or interfere with the foreign government's exercise of its legitimate sovereign rights or choices". The statement then went on to

say that such actions affect the "livelihoods of our citizens, harm our workers and businesses, and could undermine global security and stability".

It goes without saying that the level of hypocrisy and the double standards manifest in this statement are unbelievable.

The statement appeared to be a follow-up to what the US wanted to include, but was unable to, in the statement of a recent meeting of the Group of Seven developed nations, because its European affiliates, France, Germany and Italy, have a slightly softer disposition on China. Thus, it resorted to the cohort of its most loyal allies, the Five Eyes as well as Japan, to push it through.

It is staggering that they can say this with a straight face, let alone expect others to take it seriously, manifesting one rule for themselves and another for everyone else.

First of all, who is distorting trade and investment, which harms relations between countries? Was it China taking small and targeted action against a US chip company, or the US blacklisting a slew of Chinese technology companies on its Commerce Department entity list? Or was it the US subjugation of the entirety of China's semiconductor industry to the foreign direct product rule, and then its pressuring of Japan and the Netherlands to follow suit?

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PAGE TWO

From page 1

From the ages of 12 to 16, she climbed five mountains that are more than 5,000 meters high, and last year, she reached the summit of Muztagh Ata, a 7,546-meter-high peak in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Her father said, "She was the first to reach the peak on that climb — ahead of the older participants."

With a wealth of mountaineering experience under her belt, Xu Zhuoyuan left Changsha, capital of Hunan, for Nepal on April 15. She arrived at the base camp on April 28 to begin altitude acclimatization training.

On the Nepal side of the mountain, climbers attempting to reach the summit must be 16 or older and have climbed peaks of more than 6,000 meters.

At 10 pm on May 15, Xu Zhuoyuan started out from Camp 4 at an altitude of 7,950 meters on the southern face of Qomolangma, reaching the summit after 10 hours.

Her father said: "The route was too long, the altitude too high, and the wind too strong. Conditions were bad and she was caught in a snow storm."

After her successful attempt, Xu Zhuoyuan said: "The wind blew snow in my face. Two of the nine people in my group gave up the attempt for safety reasons. I don't think Qomolangma is my last mountain — it will just be one of the summits I experience to deepen my understanding of life."

She added that reaching the summit was also a tribute to the first successful attempt at scaling Qomolangma, achieved by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Nepalese Tenzing Norgay on May 29, 1953.

More participants

In China, exploring snow-clad mountains initially attracted only small numbers of people, but the pursuit has become increasingly popular over the years. In 2018, a report by the travel website Ctrip said mountain hikes had become an important leisure activity for young people.

During the May Day holiday this year, video footage of long lines of people exploring the Khumbu glacier on Qomolangma went viral on Chinese social media platforms.

The Nepal Department of Tourism has issued 463 licenses for climbers hoping to scale Qomolangma this year. Wenhui Daily reported that 99 licenses were issued to Chinese climbers — more than those from the United States. For years, most of the licenses were issued to US climbers, ahead of those from the United Kingdom.

Jiefang Daily reported that most aspiring climbers typically spend \$46,000 to \$48,000 on climbing permits, transportation, equipment and supplies, and mountain guides.

In China, more climbers such as Xu Zhuoyuan are flocking to snowy mountains in Sichuan, Yunnan and other provinces.

Data from sichuantour.cn show that by 5 pm on May 3, Siguniang Mountain had received 82,946 tourists during the May Day holiday, a year-on-year rise of over 287 percent — setting a record for the scenic area.

In Yunnan, the management committee of Yulong Mountain said the scenic spot attracted 179,700 tourists during the Spring Festival holiday, a year-on-year rise of just over 873 percent, and up by slightly more than 25 percent on the figure for 2019.

At the start of April, Liu Xiaoyu, a student at Wuhan University of Technology, decided to climb Siguniang Mountain in Sichuan with his friend Wang Kaiyao. Over a two-week period, the pair drew up travel plans, asked for leave, bought train tickets and equipment, and employed a mountain guide.

They started their climb at 10 am on April 20, chatting happily with other mountaineers.



Climbers and horseback riders explore Siguniang Mountain in Sichuan province, which is 6,250 meters high. PHOTOS BY LIU XIAOYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Climbers: Harsh weather conditions braved

Liu said: "We discovered that the girl who shared a car with us the previous day is my schoolmate. What a coincidence!"

At night, the pair rested in a tent, with snow on the ground outside, but Liu could not sleep. At 3 am, they started climbing again, but this time the task seemed much harder.

"I was not in a good state — dizzy, out of breath, and cold, but I managed to pull myself together, and my heart rate gradually slowed," Liu said.

Wang said: "I have no idea how many steep hills we have climbed, but exhaustion forced me to rest every 10 steps, which then became every five or even three steps. I had no intention of quitting, but I was worn out. I could see the dim glow of other climbers' helmet lights in the darkness, and Liu kept urging me on."

The pair reached the summit at 6:50 am on April 21, but they could not appreciate the view due to dense fog.

"The ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus believed that happiness frees the body from pain and the soul from interference. I think mountaineering is a process of seeing the world and finding oneself. What you see on camera is never as good as what you witness yourself," Liu said.

He added that the sight of dawn breaking on the mountain amid the clouds was stunning.

On March 27, Dada, 26, climbed

Yulong Mountain with one of her friends.

"As a Cantonese, I had never seen snow before, so I was enthusiastic about this trip," Dada said, adding that she recently resigned from her e-commerce job without another position to go to, because she felt depressed and under a lot of pressure. She just wanted to relax and see the snow during the trip to Yunnan.

The pair, who started out at 7 am, rented coats, as the temperature was extremely low. "We were a little awed by

the mountain's height, but I overcame my fear to take in the beautiful scenery from the funicular railway," Dada said.

When they left the funicular, Dada was thrilled, as it started to snow. She grabbed a handful of snow and took photographs.

"As I was climbing the mountain, I experienced mild altitude sickness and hypoxia (a condition in which the tissues are starved of oxygen), which made me feel as though all my pressure had gone," she added.

During the climb, she was impressed by an elderly man who told her his wife was resting at a lower altitude because of exhaustion, leaving him to reach the summit alone.

"When I descended the mountain, the wind was strong, snow blew in my face, and visibility was less than 50 meters. All I could see was whiteness," Dada said.

Safety concerns

As climbing snow mountains attracts more participants, security has become an increasingly important issue.

On May 18, Chen Xuebin, a 52-year-old mountaineer from Guizhou province, died as he attempted to reach the summit of Qomolangma.

Tenzin, a native Tibetan mountain guide and manager of a company that provides climbing and trekking services in Tibet autonomous region, said mountaineers face various dangers on Qomolangma.

"On the Nepal side, they encounter ice slides on the Khumbu glacier, frostbite and anoxia (the absence of oxygen supply to an organ or tissue)," Tenzin said.

"On the China side, they face anoxia, high-altitude sickness and strong winds. To protect themselves, climbers should have sufficient experience, register with a mountaineering company, and employ a reliable guide."

Industry insiders said a great deal of preparatory work is required before climbing Qomolangma. Years of physical training must be acquired, guides need to be hired, and climbers should learn how to deal with emergencies.

Only when they are sufficiently familiar with their equipment, including oxygen bottle, winter coat, first aid kit, satellite phone, gloves, sleeping bag and tent, can they consider themselves fully protected.

In addition, they need to complete three processes. They should start with peaks more than 5,000 meters high, such as Siguniang Mountain, then try those above 7,000 meters, like Muztagh Ata, and finally tackle mountains of more than 8,000 meters, such as Mount Manaslu in Nepal and Cho Oyu on the China-Nepal border.

Climbers can choose the China or Nepal side for climbing Qomolangma. However, for both sides, mountaineers must be healthy and have the necessary equipment and experience. On the Chinese side, they should apply to the General Administration of Sport of China for permission to climb, and follow the requested route.

Luo Caifu, a snow-mountain guide on Haba Mountain, Yunnan, started climbing mountains in his childhood.

"My father is a guide on this mountain, and my climbing experience began with his help when I was 12. The hiking route we took was short, but I was happy about walking in the wild. In 2010, I followed tourists and reached the summit. Since then, I have guided tourists on every public holiday," Luo said.

He became a professional guide for mountaineers after he graduated in July 2019. "Some tourists ask me why I don't work in a big city. I tell them I love this job because I meet different people," Luo said.

He added that this year, he has served more than 400 climbers, a return to the pre-pandemic level.

Zhu Youfang contributed to this story.

Xu Zhuoyuan (left), Dada (center) and Liu Xiaoyu are just three of China's rising numbers of young climbing enthusiasts. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Located more than 200 kilometers from Chengdu, capital of Sichuan, Siguniang Mountain is one of China's most popular destinations for climbers. LIU XIAOYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

TOP NEWS

Envoy urges climate governance support for developing countries

By MINLU ZHANG
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A Chinese envoy to the United Nations on Tuesday urged the international community to further support developing countries fostering advancements in global climate governance.

China supports the international community in strengthening policy coordination and increasing support for developing countries in funding, technology and capacity-building, driving ongoing progress in global climate governance, said Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the United Nations.

It has been observed that developing countries with weak climate resilience experience frequent occurrences of extreme weather events and natural disasters, resulting in significant damage to their development achievements, exacerbating resource constraints and spurring ethnic conflicts, Zhang told the UN Security Council on Tuesday.

At the same time, Zhang said, "the intricate connection between climate change and security risks remains incompletely understood, and the exact transmission mechanism between the two is yet to be fully comprehended".

A problem-oriented approach should be adopted, identifying root causes and proposing effective solutions, Zhang said, offering examples from Haiti to Iraq.

In Haiti, recent floods worsened the humanitarian situation tied to climate change, but gang violence and political corruption are fundamental challenges, said Zhang.

In Iraq, ecological issues related to climate change, such as water shortage and desertification exist, but the main challenge is the aftermath of foreign invasion, he said, adding that war has irreversibly damaged Iraq's environment, making land unusable.

"It is worth considering why extreme climates have varying economic and social consequences in North America and the Pacific Islands," Zhang pointed out, emphasizing that countries' capacity to address climate change differs significantly, rooted in the substantial development gap.

"Hence, the most fundamental approach to prevent the transmission of climate change into security risks is by prioritizing development. Assisting developing countries in bridging this gap, enhancing climate resilience, and strengthening coping capabilities becomes essential," he said.

In that regard, the Security Council should "avoid being merely a forum for discussion and pursuing 'political correctness.' Instead, it should adopt a pragmatic approach, aligning with its mandate, and genuinely undertake practical measures to assist developing countries in addressing security risks," he said.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's fundamental consensus "clearly assigns

historical responsibility for global climate change to developed countries, emphasizing their obligation to lead in significant emissions reduction, achieving net zero or even negative carbon emissions at an earlier stage", he said.

"Unfortunately, in the past year, certain developed countries have witnessed a regression in their energy policies, resulting in increased fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions," he said.

It raises the question of whether the "negative reversal" in meeting emission-reduction commitments, including unilateral withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, "constitutes a threat to international peace and security, considering the potential security implications of climate change", Zhang asked.

In 2017, the US announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under the Trump administration, making it the only nation among the nearly 200 signatories to divert from its commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, according to NPR.

The envoy said that insufficient funding is another primary bottleneck in global climate governance, urging the developed countries to address their "outstanding climate financing obligations".

Zhang also cautioned about the developed countries' green protectionism. "Under the pretext of energy transformation, some countries enact unfair legislation, provide hefty subsidies to their industries, and impose trade barriers on green sectors in other countries," said Zhang.

"This violates WTO rules, disrupt the global green industrial and supply chains, undermine sustainable development goals and contradict international efforts to combat climate change," he said.

"The Security Council must oppose these practices and address the climate and security risks they pose," Zhang said, adding that illegal unilateral sanctions further "restrict development and stability for affected countries."

"The council should prioritize the voices of impacted people, combat green protectionism and sanctions, and uphold fairness and justice," said Zhang.

Zhang's call resonated with former Colombian president and Nobel Prize laureate Juan Manuel Santos, who also urged the Security Council on Tuesday to take further action in addressing the challenge of climate insecurity.

"We are at a moment in history where the world is at risk of dividing into blocs which compete for power and supremacy over each other, rather than cooperating to address the unprecedented challenges and existential threats that we all face," he said.

He urged countries to seek common ground through constructive dialogue and cooperation, emphasizing that there is only one way forward: "Unite, cooperate, or we will all perish."



Volcano spurs evacuation

Philippine Navy personnel help women and children disembark from a military truck on Tuesday as they arrive at an evacuation camp in Santo Domingo, a town in the country's Albay province. More than 13,000 people have been evacuated since the Philippines' most active volcano, Mount Mayon, began spewing lava and sulfuric gas on Sunday, authorities said.

AARON FAVILA / AP

China, Honduras to strengthen relationship

Li calls for promoting common development in meeting with Castro

By CAO DESHENG
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Premier Li Qiang has called for bolstering pragmatic cooperation between China and Honduras so that the peoples of both countries benefit from concrete actions.

He made the remark during a meeting on Tuesday with visiting Honduran President Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento in Beijing.

Li said the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Honduras was an important political decision made by the heads of state of the two countries.

China greatly appreciates Honduras' firm commitment to the one-China principle, and is willing to work with Honduras to enhance pragmatic cooperation, tap the

potential of bilateral trade and actively conduct people-to-people and cultural exchanges, he said.

Li underlined the need for both countries to strengthen coordination and cooperation in multilateral affairs, and act as good friends and partners who respect each other based on equality and mutual benefit, in order to jointly promote common development.

China welcomes Honduras as a new member of the "big family" of the Belt and Road Initiative, he said.

Castro expressed her gratitude to China for the valuable and effective work carried out to promote cooperation between the two countries since the establishment of diplomatic ties in March.

She said that Honduras abides by the one-China principle, sup-

ports a series of important initiatives proposed by President Xi Jinping and is willing to work together with China to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in various fields, as well as promote the stable and long-term development of bilateral ties.

Castro, who arrived on Friday for a six-day state visit to China, met with Xi on Monday in Beijing. During their historic meeting, the two leaders exchanged views on bilateral ties and regional and international issues of common concern, and reached a broad consensus.

The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on jointly promoting the BRI on Monday. Under the initiative, China and Honduras will jointly explore the converging points of

the two economies, the National Development and Reform Commission said on Tuesday. They will actively promote policy communication, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people exchanges, it added.

On Tuesday, Castro met with Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, and Li Xi, secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the Communist Party of China's top anti-corruption body.

Zhao said the fruitful results achieved between the two countries in a short period of time fully demonstrate that the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Honduras conforms to the historical trend and serves the fundamental interests of both peoples.

During his meeting with Castro, Li, secretary of the CCPI, briefed her about the CPC's efforts in exercising full and rigorous governance over the Party and in fighting corruption. He said that China is willing to strengthen exchanges with Honduras related to its governance experience in multiple areas, including anti-corruption.

High-speed trains to run on Qinghai-Tibet line soon

By DAQIONG
and PALDEN NYIMA in Lhasa

China's fastest train — the Fuxing bullet — is expected to run on the Qinghai-Tibet Railway line by next month, according to China Railway Qinghai-Tibet Group.

Basic renovation of the Xining-Golmud section of the railway has been completed, with construction work done so far being approved last week, said Ma Yinjun, deputy general manager of the company.

The project has now entered its "static acceptance stage", or hand-over of the station house and other facilities, laying the foundation for the "dynamic acceptance stage", or test run of the Fuxing bullet train on the line, Ma said.

The railway company started renovating a 760-kilometer-long

stretch of the 814 km Xining-Golmud section in June 2021 with an estimated investment of 1.5 billion yuan (\$209 million).

Given the progress of the project, the Fuxing bullet is expected to start operating on the section in July, the company said, adding that the high-speed train, which can reach a top speed of 160 km per hour on this line, will reduce the travel time between Xining and Golmud by roughly an hour.

Ma said a "dedicated quality management and acceptance team" has been formed to monitor the project and carry out multiple tasks. The team comprises nearly 100 staff members from 36 departments and units of the company.

"The team will conduct tests and tasks related to power supply, communication signals, passenger and freight information, carriage facili-

ties, station house construction, water conservation and environmental protection," he said.

Once all "static acceptance work" is completed, the project will enter the phase of joint debugging and dynamic testing, when the Fuxing bullet train will undergo trial runs.

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway line runs between Xining in Qinghai province and Lhasa in the Tibet autonomous region. Construction of the Xining-Golmud section began in 1958 and was completed in 1984, while the section between Golmud and Lhasa became operational in 2006.

Over the past four decades, the line saw many upgrades, but the Xining-Golmud section, which was fraught with several geological and technical disadvantages, could support only trains running

at a maximum speed of 140 km per hour until the recent renovation work.

"The project fixed the railroad bed's frost and sand damage, and reversed soil salinity on the section. It also repaired weak bridges and culverts along the line," Ma said. "Facilities at some stations with a high passenger volume are currently being strengthened."

With the rapid improvement of China's comprehensive strength in recent years, it was proposed that the transportation capacity between Xining and Golmud be increased to spur further economic development of the Qinghai-Tibet region. Major transformation of the whole line is on the cards, Ma said.

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Hypocrisy: US uses 'economic coercion' on grander scale

From page 1

Or was it when the US used the pretext of national security to force allies to blacklist Huawei from their 5G networks, or when it used the opportunistic accusation of "forced labor" in an effort to push China out of the solar panel and renewable energy supply chains? Or was it the forcing of countries to cancel certain Chinese investments in their national infrastructure?

Perhaps it is the 60-year-long embargo against Cuba, or the flouting of the United Nations-backed Iran deal to place crippling unilateral sanctions on the country. Or maybe it was the imposition of measures that sent Venezuela and Syria into a humanitarian crisis by indirectly blocking every means of

Can the US ever say that it has not used punitive measures to undermine or influence the sovereignty of other countries with respect to its geopolitical goals?

transaction to do business with the country.

The list is endless. But what about the so-called "sovereign rights or choices" of such states? Does that include the threats directed at countries such as the Solomon Islands for seeking security cooperation with China? Or does it respect China's sovereign rights with respect to

the Taiwan question or the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, among others?

Can the US ever say that it has not used punitive measures to undermine or influence the sovereignty of other countries with respect to its geopolitical goals?

The reality is that there is no other country that has used "economic coercion" on a grander scale than the US, which has stopped at nothing in efforts to economically cripple its opponents in the name of upholding its own hegemony.

In talking about a so-called "rules-based order", the US effectively reserves the right to do what it wants to other countries, but another power should not dare to defend its own interests.

The recent joint statement shows that the US does not fun-

damentally respect China as an equal, but expects it to be a "rule taker" and not a "rule maker" whose development must be conditional to the economic hegemony and dominance of the US.

Washington apparently believes that Beijing should not have the right to use its hard-won economic development to defend its national interests when necessary, even though China merely asks that its core interests be respected.

As such, the statement by the Five Eyes and Japan undoubtedly goes down as one of the most hypocritical efforts of all time, if not the most.

The author is a British political and international relations analyst. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Ties: Nation facilitates regional peace earnestly

From page 1

Wu Bingbing, director of Peking University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, voiced his hopes that China could introduce more hope, changes and options for the peaceful settlement of conflict in the Middle East, as the Palestine issue has lingered for nearly 100 years.

"Resolving the Palestine issue requires dealing with various countries in the Middle East region, and it means greater difficulty in achieving a balance among parties with vested interests," he said.

"The Palestine issue remains the core issue in the Middle East region, and the settlement of other issues there will face constraints if the Palestine issue cannot achieve

noticeable progress," Wu added.

Niu Xinchun, director of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations' Institute of Middle East Studies, said that in recent years, China has been earnestly facilitating peace in the Middle East.

"The major bottlenecks of the Middle East region's security include the absence of a regional security mechanism, not to mention a multilateral dialogue platform (for regional security)," he said.

Chinese diplomats have proposed building a platform for the Gulf region for controlling and managing potential crises through collective consultation, and many Arab states have responded positively to the Global Security Initiative proposed by China last year, Niu added.

CHINA

Tian'anmen Rostrum reopens to the public

By DU JUAN
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Tian'anmen Rostrum, a symbol of the nation, reopened to the public on Tuesday after undergoing several years of renovation, according to its management authority.

Tian'anmen was the principal entryway into the Imperial Palace during the Ming and Qing dynasties spanning from the early 15th century to the early 20th century.

Many historic events were held at the gate, including the founding ceremony of the People's Republic of China on Oct 1, 1949.

According to the WeChat account of the management authority of Tian'anmen Rostrum, people can make reservations to visit through its website or WeChat account at least one day in advance.

There are no on-site tickets available and the authority has not authorized any third-party institutions or individuals to act as ticket agents.

Enthusiasm for visiting the rostrum from the public is high, with the website showing that tickets from Tuesday to Sunday have already sold out. Tickets starting from next Tuesday have not been released yet.



I have learned about it from our Chinese textbooks from when we were little kids. It has always been my wish to feel the history and glory of our country by standing there."

Li Xiaoli, a 62-year-old resident in Beijing

"I am more than excited to hear the news," said Xu Xiaohan, a senior university student studying in Beijing. "As a student from another province, I have always wanted to see the remarkable scenery of Beijing from the rostrum."

Li Xiaoli, a 62-year-old resident in Beijing, who comes from Shanxi province, said she will ask her son to make a reservation for her to go to the rostrum.

"I have learned about it from our Chinese textbooks from when we were little kids. It has always been my wish to feel the history and glory of our country by standing there," she said.

The opening of Tian'anmen Rostrum provides a chance for people to have a deeper understanding of the city and its history.

After Chairman Mao Zedong announced the founding of the People's Republic of China on Oct 1, 1949, from the Tian'anmen Rostrum, the site only opened its doors for important national events, such as receiving distinguished foreign guests, until 1988 when it was officially opened to the public.

At the beginning, the price for entry was 10 yuan (\$1.40) for domestic visitors. The price was not low at that time, but more than 600,000 visits were recorded in 1988 alone, according to a report in China Today magazine.

Tian'anmen Rostrum has been closed to the public since June 2018 for maintenance and construction work.

Another cultural relic, the Drum Tower and Bell Tower, will reopen to the public starting on Friday, announced its management authority on Monday.

Lying on the central axis of the capital, the Drum Tower and Bell Tower were built in 1272 and rebuilt twice after fires. At one period in history, they were the time-telling center of the city during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties (1271-1911).

Robot runners



A contestant participates in a robot sprint competition during the 25th China Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Competition National Finals in Haikou, Hainan province, on Tuesday. More than 800 teams from over 300 universities across the country competed on-site and online. The event was initiated in 1999 and is an influential national robot competition. YUAN CHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Govt goes extra mile to match jobs and seekers

Over 10 million vacancies to be compiled to maximize access to opportunities

By CHENG SI
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The central government has undertaken more effective ways of channeling information about vacancies to job seekers, especially college students, who are facing greater employment pressure as graduation season approaches.

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security launched a three-month campaign on Tuesday, under which it will collect over 10 million vacancies from companies and grassroots government bodies for college students and other job seekers.

The employment of college students has been highly stressed by governments of all levels as the number of graduates has continued increasing in the past few years — reaching 11.58 million this year, and putting great pressure on the job market.

Under the campaign, directors of local human resources bureaus are encouraged to visit companies and industrial zones to collect information on vacancies. The ministry is also encouraging commercial

human resources agencies, industrial associations and social organizations to get involved in the campaign.

According to the ministry's latest release, some professional job fairs will be organized in the sectors of pharmaceuticals, healthcare, information technology and manufacturing, which have higher demand for labor. Job fairs will also be organized in provinces and cities that are more attractive to college students for landing jobs.

Online job fairs and interview guidance offered by the ministry and local human resources departments will be available to job seekers during the next three months.

Universities have played a more active role in helping college students to connect with employers. Jin Yuanyuan, deputy director of the employment and entrepreneurship center of Beijing University of Technology, said the university has organized 25 job fairs since September.

She said these fairs have attracted nearly 1,400 companies, offered over 80,000 vacancies and received over 10,000 attendees.

Li Qiang, vice-president of recruit-

ment portal Zhaopin, said the job market is facing increasing pressure from the growing population of fresh college graduates and those graduates who haven't landed jobs.

"Universities have increased admission quotas to liberal arts students while companies show higher preferences for hiring science students, which may cause employment imbalances," he said. "College graduates have also changed their preferences for employers in the past few years, from some innovative small and medium-sized companies to State-run companies offering more stable jobs. That's also a problem."

He suggested that universities cooperate with companies to optimize their curriculum and majors suitable to the market's needs. The companies can also offer students more internship opportunities to help them master some practical working skills.

"The government can also encourage college graduates to expand their employment possibilities, including starting their own businesses, getting part-time jobs or taking flexible jobs. Employers can give more flexible recruitment policies and put a focus on college graduates' abilities and potential more than on their educational background," he added.

Race on to find graduate employment

By ZOU SHUO in Beijing
and LIU KUN in Wuhan

590,000 college graduates are expected in Hubei province this year, a record high.

ment officials, and government institutions increasing by 17 percent year-on-year.

Hubei has tried very hard to guide graduates to work in grassroots positions by expanding the scale of special recruitment campaigns for teachers in rural areas, grassroots officials in central and western regions, and village doctors.

Elderly nursing homes and social service centers are also encouraged to prioritize hiring college graduates.

Human resources and social security authorities in Hubei have worked with enterprises to hold more job fairs, said Liu Weiping, an official with the Hubei Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security.

School administrators at Huazhong Agricultural University have visited 130 enterprises to expand employment opportunities for graduates and established employment bases at 10 enterprises this year.

A total of 1,667 enterprises have come to the university to hire graduates this year, providing 20 potential opportunities per graduate, according to the university.

The university has also offered

students guidance in making resumes, attending job interviews and held individual and group employment guidance sessions.

Wuhan Technology and Business University has employed career guidance teachers and set up records of the employment situation of all students to offer them targeted help and guidance, the university said.

Xu Wenhui, 22, a senior undergraduate student at Huazhong Agricultural University, said after she failed the national civil servant exam in March, she felt at a loss and anxious as many of her classmates had landed jobs.

After she told a teacher at the university's student employment center about her situation, the teacher had a lengthy conversation with her to encourage her, she said.

"The teacher told me to go to more job fairs and recommended me to human resource personnel at China Construction Electric Power Construction, and after passing all the necessary interviews and requirements, I will start working at the company in the HR department in July."

Xu said she is from a village in Cangzhou, Hebei province and her parents are farmers, so they lack the resources or expertise to help her find jobs.

"I have to rely on myself, and thanks to the help of school teachers, I have found a satisfactory job."

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Housing policies assist multi-child families

By ZHENG CAIXIONG
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Preferential housing policies are being introduced to help support multi-child families in Guangdong province.

According to the measures, families with multiple children will be given priority in renting government housing and buying properties in the coming months.

Families that meet the conditions and have a large number of children can be included in the priority rental allocation, or they can be directly selected based on local housing resources, the measures said.

Meanwhile, cities and regions can provide appropriate support policies, increasing the amount of housing provident fund loans for families with multiple children to purchase their first home.

The measures were drafted by the provincial health commission, the development and reform commission, and 15 other bureaus and departments.

"It will provide strong support for Guangdong to achieve a moderate fertility level and promote long-term balanced population development," the measures said.

With a population of more than 127 million, Guangdong is China's most populous province. But major cities, including Guangzhou and Shenzhen, started to witness a reduction in population starting at the end of last year, official statistics have revealed.

Families have welcomed the new policies.

Wu Shaoshuang, a primary school teacher in Dongguan city,

said the new policies are good news for families with multiple children.

"The biggest help is that the new policy gives us more confidence to realize buying our own home in big cities," said Wu, a mother of three children.

Ordinary residents have many difficulties purchasing homes in big cities because of the prices, she said, adding that she has yet to purchase her own apartment in Dongguan.

Lin Lei, a white-collar worker in Guangzhou, said the favorable housing policies are reasonable, as they can help reduce the burden for the families in purchasing homes.

The introduction of the new policies can indeed encourage people to have more children, especially young people, said Lin, who has one child.

"But from my personal perspective, whether to have a second or third child should mainly be based on my own actual situation and abilities, and I would not be solely influenced by policies to decide to have one or two more children," she told China Daily.

The measures also urged education and relevant departments to improve childcare services to help families overcome their difficulties in looking after children.

More kindergartens and schools should also be constructed to meet demand, the measures said.

The measures suggested that more companies and factories should introduce flexible working hours for young mothers who have to look after children.

Wang Han contributed to this story.



Farmers work in ancient salt fields in a village in Markham county, Chamdo, Tibet autonomous region. ZHOU DIXIAO / XINHUA

Traditional salt-making receives legal protection

By DAQIONG
and PALDEN NYIMA in Lhasa

The traditional craft of salt production in Tsakhalho township of Chamdo, Tibet autonomous region, has been protected by local legislation, city officials said recently at a conference.

According to the conference, a regulation protecting the county's ancient salt field took effect on June 1. It is a new step to protect the valuable cultural heritage through legislation.

Located at the junction of the provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan and the Tibet autonomous region, Tsakhalho is rich in salt wells. With a history of at least 1,300 years, the salt production method of Tsakhalho has been well-preserved.

Lu Sheng, a native of Tsakhalho, said the rough terrain and steep mountains limited farming, and people in her hometown would barter for the necessities of life using salt as payment.

"Today, the situation is dramatically different, but villagers still produce salt using the ancient methods because it's part of their culture. Many people still want to buy the handmade salt," Lu said.

Long ago, salt was their main source of income, and it still brings cash today, as many local villagers operate tourism businesses. Residents and officials reached a consensus that the continuity of the salt tradition needs to be preserved.

The regulation includes provisions on protection and management, reasonable utilization, legal

responsibilities and supplementary provisions, said He Junhui, deputy director of the Chamdo people's congress standing committee's legislative affairs commission.

"The specific content of the regulation includes strengthening government responsibility to further promote the sustainable development of salt wells and ancient salt fields, and to clarify the protection objects, principles and scope, and to improve specific measures for protection management," He added.

Sonam Wangdu, head of the city's culture bureau, said cultural relics institutes will adopt effective use under the priority of protection first.

"It's to achieve win-win protection and development goals through bringing the cultural relics alive," he said.

Zeng Qingquan, deputy director of the city's tourism development bureau, said the regulation has made clear provisions on the protection, management and rational utilization of the resources of the ancient salt fields in Markham county.

"This has laid a solid foundation for the integrated development of scenic culture and tourism," Zeng said.

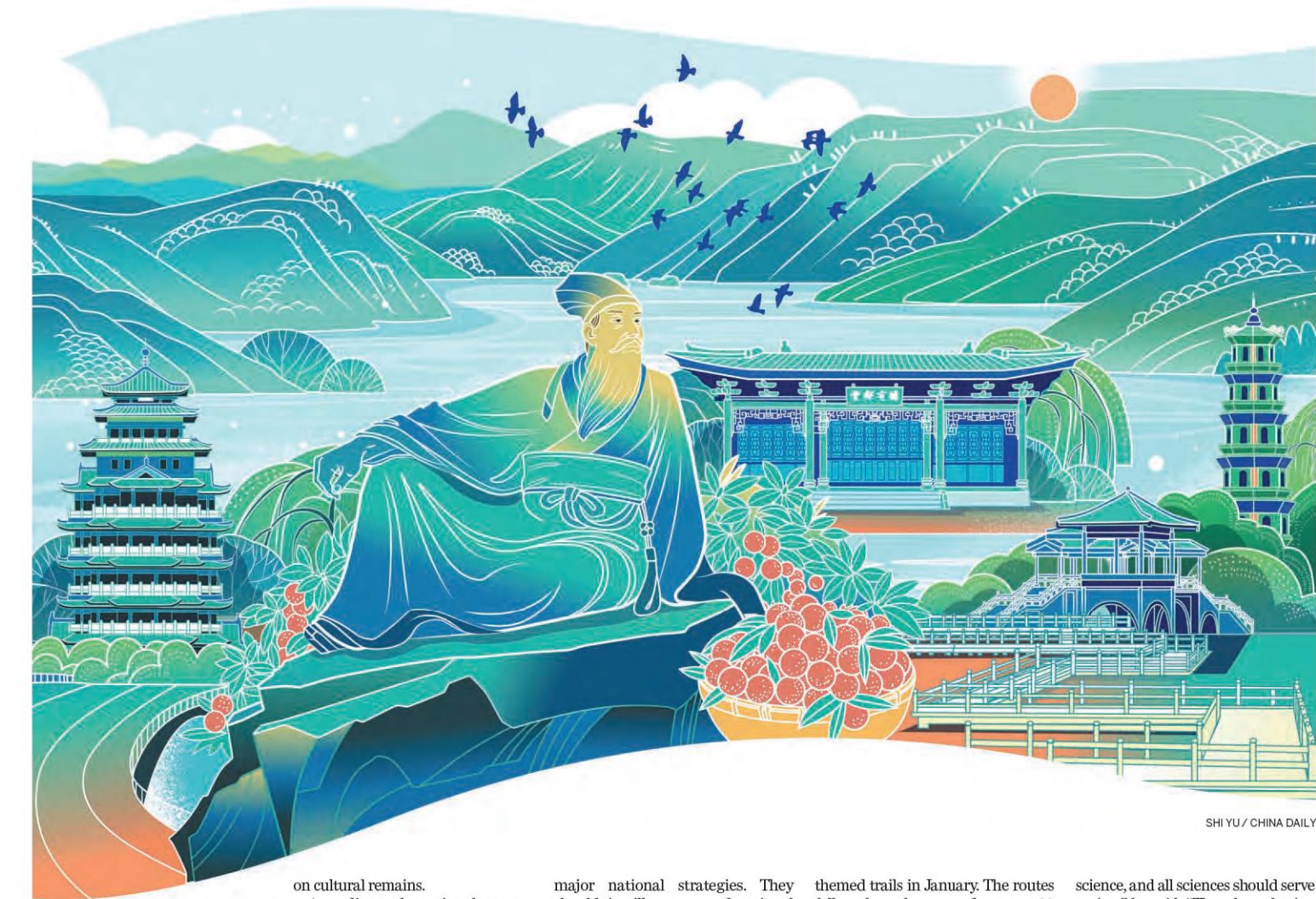
As early as 2003, the salt field project was established as a county-level cultural relics institute. Renovations were undertaken to fasten wooden columns and salt-drying pans.

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POLICY REVIEW

New travel trails to promote culture

Routes to bring tourists to heritage sites connected by various themes related to historical events, figures



By WANG RU in Beijing and WANG KAIHAO in Chengdu

For generations of literature lovers, a memorial temple in Meishan, Sichuan province, has been a landmark. The San Su Shrine was the former Su family residence during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). In their day, three famous writers, Su Xun, Su Shi and Su Zhe — a father and his two sons — demonstrated the importance of education and culture in development, as well as the duty that literati had toward their country. While visiting the shrine in 2022, President Xi Jinping hailed it as a site that showcased cultural confidence and served as an inspiration for national governance. Su Shi was the shining star among the trio. As a poet, calligrapher, politician and gourmet, he is a household name in China. More importantly, his righteousness, honesty and optimism in the face of challenges have inspired people for generations. But these days, what can the government do to breathe life into the memory of Su Shi and others like him? And how can people better understand a theme in traditional Chinese culture in a bigger picture? In May, the National Cultural Heritage Administration, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Development and Reform Commission issued a notice on the development of travel routes themed

on cultural remains. According to the notice, the routes should take tourists to cultural heritage sites connected by certain themes. As one of the first steps taken in line with the notice, representatives of 10 provincial governments visiting Chengdu, Sichuan's provincial capital, on Saturday, China's annual Cultural and Natural Heritage Day, announced that they would promote the coordinated design of travel routes based on sites related to Su Shi. Promoted over the course of the reigns of four emperors, he was both a high-status politician in the imperial capital and also devoted to local affairs as he served as an official in various regions. A pilgrimage honoring Su Shi's life is the first of many themed trails being planned across the country. "For a long time, the development of tourist attractions and efforts to protect cultural heritage were organized in a scattered way, but the creation of such trails will link the sites and will be good for their systematic protection," said Zhan Dongmei, an associate researcher with the China Tourism Academy. "It also offers an immersive cultural and tourist experience for travelers."

Three trail types

The notice stated that the routes should be developed at the national, regional and county levels. National-level trails should be connected to the development of national cultural parks and align with

major national strategies. They should instill a sense of national pride and strengthen the global influence of Chinese culture. During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), up to five experimental national trails will be created, according to the document. Upon completion, authorities will publish directories and maps of the trails. Important regions in China, including the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, have been encouraged to set up regional travel trails. The notice also calls on provinces with an abundance of cultural remains to establish travel routes. County-level trails will focus on cultural heritage sites that people tend to ignore, thus introducing them to a wider audience. "When people follow themed trails, in addition to appreciating cultural heritage, they can also learn more about the value and cultural connotations of the sites and gain a deeper understanding of a historical period, event or figure," Zhan said. The document said that famous roads, sites, influential historical events and figures can all be regarded as themes for routes.

Routes underway

Some trails related to cultural heritage have already been developed. For example, according to the Tianjin Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, the city unveiled its first group of cultural heritage

themed trails in January. The routes follow three themes and connect 38 cultural heritage sites in eight of the city's districts. One of the trails connects sites related to the Grand Canal, illustrating Tianjin's history as an important stop along the canal. Another route links the sites of foreign banks present between 1840 to 1949, demonstrating Tianjin's past as a northern financial hub during the period. The inclusion of innovative activities is encouraged in the design of trails. They can be combined with study tours, hiking, biking, camping, performances and even sports. Moreover, modern technology such as big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence should be involved to create immersive experiences, the notice said. According to Zhan, Tianjin is planning its second group of trails, which will link more types of culture-related companies and combine more forms of entertainment. "In this way, people will be able to experience more of the city's charm during even a limited visit," Zhan said. In the long run, the efforts could strengthen the appreciation of cultural heritage, enhance the historical and cultural aspects of tourism and contribute to the increasing desire for a better life, she said. Liu Qingzhu, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and dean of history school at Zhengzhou University, highlighted the combination of archaeological sites with tourism. "Archaeology is a social

science, and all sciences should serve society," he said. "Therefore, sharing the progress of archaeological studies, including the sites and unearthed artifacts with the public in this way, is meaningful." Liu said that improving the quality of tourist guides on routes is important, adding that it is good to tell the stories behind cultural heritage. "It's important to help people gain something from history, which encapsulates the experiences of our ancestors. It should not be over-commercialized," he said. According to the NCHA notice, the cultural heritage authorities will examine cultural heritage and oversee the explanations of their value. The culture and tourism authorities will encourage tourist organizations to participate in the planning and operation of themed trails and promote them, while development and reform commissions at all levels of government will support efforts to create facilities related to trails. Provincial-level cultural heritage administrations are required to report the development status of trails to the National Cultural Heritage Administration at the end of each year, after which the administration, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Development and Reform Commission will select the best examples.

Xu Lin contributed to this story. Contact the writers at wangru1@chinadaily.com.cn

Plan aims to protect, use Three Gorges artifacts

By XU LIN in Beijing and ZHOU LIHUA in Wuhan

Authorities recently announced a plan to protect and make use of heritage sites and artifacts unearthed in the Three Gorges Dam area along the Yangtze River. The plan, scheduled for 2023 to 2035, focuses chiefly on protecting the relics and their environment and designates a 57,500-square-kilometer protection area encompassing 26 districts and counties in Chongqing municipality and Hubei province, through which the Three Gorges area passes. The plan states that by 2025, greater effort will have been made to restore the heritage sites and artifacts, with significant examples becoming properly protected and made use of effectively. By 2035, substantial progress is expected to have been made, with a sustainable mechanism established

for the protection and use of heritage sites and artifacts, and ancient remains are to have been successfully integrated with tourism and national environmental preservation efforts. By last year, there were 16,601 immovable and 544,799 movable relics in the Three Gorges area. The plan emphasizes enhancing archaeological work in the Three Gorges area, exploring the cultural and historical value of heritage sites and artifacts found in the area and highlighting their significance to the Yangtze River culture and wider Chinese civilization. Priorities include undertaking major archaeological research projects, ensuring the proper excavation, organization and interpretation of findings and enhancing archaeology in the Three Gorges area. An official statement from the National Cultural Heritage Administration emphasized the impor-

ance of the systematic preservation of Three Gorges heritage sites and artifacts, strengthening the management and security of the area's cultural heritage and using technology to support this work. It also stressed the importance of finding new ways to exhibit and make use of heritage sites and artifacts, promoting integration between artifact preservation and use with rural revitalization and tourism, and telling new stories about traditional culture. The plan also states that Three Gorges archaeology is expected to play a vital role in showcasing the origins of Chinese civilization, and its developments and achievements. "To achieve that, first it's important to ensure that archaeology fulfills its educational role. Some of the cultural treasures are already on display in some of Yichang's museums, enabling visitors to learn about

the Three Gorges culture," said He Zhongyuan, deputy curator of the Yichang Museum in Hubei. "Second, exhibitions of the Three Gorges artifacts need to be organized in locations outside the region." The Yichang Museum is currently hosting an exhibition of stone inscriptions discovered in the area. The exhibition can be viewed both in-person and online, and opens up access to a wider audience. He said that the exhibition will facilitate cultural exchange and can be held at other museums as part of a reciprocal program. According to the plan, Three Gorges heritage sites and artifacts are still underused. He said that over half of Yichang's cultural relics consist of tombs, heritage sites, grotto temples and stone carvings. Because many are privately owned, it is neither practical nor possible for many of them to go on public display. Still,

many tombs and stone carvings are located in wild areas that the public can access for free. "This represents a different form of use compared to traditional cultural attractions," he said. He suggested that authorities should disclose the state of cultural heritage to the public, to ensure that everyone is aware of the heritage sites and artifacts present in the reservoir area. Moreover, they should engage with the public and harness their creative potential. This can be achieved by attracting direct investment for the restoration and use of heritage sites and artifacts, as well as by encouraging participation in the design of cultural and creative products, such as those inspired by the many stone inscriptions found in the Three Gorges area. He also emphasized that cultural heritage authorities should provide appropriate guidance during the public use process.

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Policy Digest

Draft guideline to curb online violence

China is soliciting public opinions on a draft guideline about how to properly punish people engaged in online violence. The guideline, drafted by the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security, is aimed at protecting the personality rights of individuals and maintaining order on the internet. According to the draft, online violence includes behaviors such as spreading rumors and slander and the infringement of privacy, which damage reputations and can psychologically disturb victims or even lead them to commit suicide, it said. Given that the victims of online violence rarely know their attackers and so have trouble identifying the perpetrators, collecting evidence and pursuing legal remedies, the draft requires authorities to offer better legal assistance to victims. Those who commit online violence against minors or people with disabilities, or who fabricate sex-related stories that infringe upon personal dignity, will be punished more severely, the draft guideline stated. It also stipulated that in some cases, depending on severity, authorities could apply the Criminal Law to punish those accountable. The solicitation of public opinion will end on June 25.

Imports, exports up despite low demand

China's imports and exports increased 4.7 percent year-on-year to 16.77 trillion yuan (\$2.35 trillion) in the first five months of 2023, showing continued resilience despite sluggish external demand. During this period, exports grew 8.1 percent year-on-year while imports rose 0.5 percent, the General Administration of Customs said on June 7. Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations continued to be China's largest trading partners during the five months, with trade volume reaching 2.59 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 9.9 percent. From January to May, trade with member countries of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement experienced stable growth, accounting for more than 30 percent of China's foreign trade, GAC data showed. Trade with Belt and Road countries rose 13.2 percent year-on-year to 5.78 trillion yuan in the period. In particular, trade with the five Central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — surged 44 percent year-on-year, the GAC said. During the January-May period, imports and exports by private enterprises jumped 13.1 percent to 8.86 trillion yuan, accounting for 52.8 percent of the national total. In terms of the types of goods, exports of mechanical and electrical products expanded by 9.5 percent and accounted for 57.9 percent of total exports.

5G being integrated into national economy

The application of 5G networks is being consistently promoted and has been integrated into nearly 60 percent of the major categories that make up the national economy, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology told China Central Television on June 6. China first started to grant 5G licenses for commercial use on June 6, 2019. Four years on, solutions supported by 5G applications are being widely used in key industries related to mining, ports and electric power, and are facilitating the digitalization of companies. According to the ministry, 5G is being used by 60 of 97 categories that make up the national economy, with more than 50,000 applied cases.

CHINA DAILY-XINHUA

WORLD

China-Arab cooperation benefits all

Collaboration on trade, energy to create basis for multipolar world, forum hears

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
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Business exchanges among Chinese and Arab entrepreneurs are contributing not only to the development of their countries but also to the world's shared future, said speakers at a regional trade forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The 10th Arab-China Business Conference, themed "Collaborating For Prosperity", concluded on Monday with experts lauding the opportunities for cooperation between China and Arab countries.

In a speech on the second and final day of the conference, New Development Bank President Dilma Rousseff said a new and important market-like energy is fast-growing and creating the basis for a multipolar world.

Cooperation along the ancient Silk Road "has witnessed the development of two great civilizations" — Chinese and Arab, she said. Both have achieved significant global accomplishments while interacting with and inspiring each other across the Middle East and Asia.

"China and Saudi Arabia have the potential to rewrite the rules of the global energy market, leading the way in diversifying currencies and embracing new models of economic collaboration," said Rousseff, who was elected president of the Shanghai-headquartered bank in March.

The China-Saudi partnership can also inspire the Global South to expand internal and external regional trade, offering great possibilities to countries currently marginalized by the traditional international financial system, she said.

"We must deepen the movement of globalization by establishing specific regional 'great dealers', which will contribute to creating a new global economic order where developing and emerging economies have a strong and influential voice."

The emerging economies account

for more than 50 percent of the global GDP in terms of purchasing power parity and will continue to grow in importance, she said. "The Arab world, as an important member of the developed world, possesses diverse resources and has achieved remarkable development, demonstrating enormous potential."

On the sidelines of the conference, Nicolas Aguzin, CEO of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd, said investors in the Middle East are diversifying their investments as the world pivots toward Asia.

"Today if we take the top 10 sovereign wealth funds in the Middle East, it is about \$4 trillion of investment capital that they have available," he said. "That is going to grow close to \$10 trillion by 2030."

Massive investments

However, a very small portion of that is invested in Asia, or 1 to 2 percent of that is in China, he added. "As it goes to \$1 trillion", more than 10 percent or 20 percent will be invested in China, which means "between \$1 and 2 trillion will be reallocated in investments in the country, which is massive," he said.

Barry Chan, managing director and head of Asia and Australia region of the China International Capital Corporation, said people in the Middle East "are very interested in China" and vice versa.

But more efforts are needed for them to familiarize themselves with one another, he said. And Hong Kong, an international financial center for the region, is a very good connection.

Hamdi Tabbaa, president of the Federation of Arab Businessmen, said beyond business, he believes cooperation in education between China and Arab countries can go further given their "excellent relations".

"We ... are very proud to have such excellent relations with China. China is well respected in the Arab countries ... not only investment-wise."

Home at last



Luciana Santos, Brazil's minister of science, technology and innovation, stands next to a dinosaur fossil during an official handover in Brasilia, Brazil, on Monday. The fossil is back in its native Brazil after demands for its return caused a stir two years ago. It was thought to have been brought illegally to Germany. MYKE SENA / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fallout spreads after Johnson's resignation

By JULIAN SHEA in London
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Members of the House of Commons Privileges Committee held talks on Monday about when the panel is likely to publish its report into allegations that former British prime minister Boris Johnson misled Parliament over pandemic lockdown rule-breaking incidents dubbed Partygate.

The panel would have the power to suspend Johnson from Parliament, but he stunned political observers on Friday by announcing his resignation as a member of Parliament with immediate effect.

In his resignation statement, Johnson said he had received a letter from the committee "making it clear — much to my amazement — that they are determined to use the proceedings against me to drive me out of Parliament".

He accused the seven-member committee, which has a majority of members from his own Conservative Party, of having "willfully chosen to ignore the truth".

"Their purpose from the beginning has been to find me guilty, regardless of the facts. This is the very definition of a kangaroo court," he continued.

He concluded by saying he was "very sad to be leaving Parliament — at least for now".

While drawing predictable criticism from political opponents, his actions also provoked an angry reaction among fellow Conservatives.

Tim Loughton, former chair of the Parliamentary Home Affairs select committee, said, "My hope for the future of Boris Johnson is that he will shut up and go away and let us get on with the business of running the country."

'Akin to mutiny'

Long-standing critic Tobias Ellwood was even more direct. He said Johnson had "departed in his own style, kicking and screaming with so much drama, inflicting damage as he goes ... his actions are akin to mutiny".

Former Brexit secretary David Davis said, "The truth of the matter is, ask around Parliament, ask most of the MPs, most people are fairly sure he misled the house."

Johnson's exit came on the same day when his resignation honors list was announced, a privilege available to but not taken up by all former prime ministers, where they can bestow honors on their political associates.

Because of the controversy that hangs over Johnson, many observers considered it inappropriate for him to be allowed such patronage, with the appointment of little-known 29-year-old former adviser Charlotte Owen to a lifetime seat in the House of Lords drawing particular criticism.

The angry tone of Johnson's latest exit, his insistence of his innocence, and his thinly-veiled threat to return will heighten tensions within the Conservative Party and create problems for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, whom many Johnson loyalists have never forgiven for his part in unseating the former PM last year.

During the weekend, the House of Lords Appointments Commission, or HOLAC, turned down eight of Johnson's Lords appointees. And on Monday, the BBC quoted Sunak as saying Johnson had asked him to overrule their verdict.

"Boris Johnson asked me to do something that I wasn't prepared to do because I didn't think it was right. That was to either overrule the HOLAC committee or make promises to people," Sunak said.

"I wasn't prepared to do that. As I said, I didn't think it was right. And if people don't like that, then tough."

In Japan, tests start to dump toxic water

TOKYO — The operator of the wrecked Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant began tests on Monday of newly constructed facilities for discharging nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, a plan strongly opposed by local fishermen and the international community.

According to the national broadcaster NHK, Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, started the trial operation on Monday morning which mixes fresh water and seawater that does not contain radioactive substances to confirm whether the sea discharge equipment can operate reliably.

TEPCO says the voluntary tests are expected to continue for about two weeks ahead of mandatory pre-operation checks to be conducted by the Nuclear Regulation Authority, possibly in early July.

TEPCO finished sending seawater last week into an underwater tunnel built in front of the nuclear plant for its planned discharge, adding it plans to complete all facility-related preparations by the end of June.

On Saturday, Japanese Industry Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura met with local fisheries representatives to seek their understanding for the planned release in Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture, where representatives expressed grave concerns over the move, saying they remain opposed to the release. They said the plan to release the radioactive wastewater over decades is "fueling anxiety about the future and doubts about continuous fishing operations".

"We stand by our opposition," Tetsu Nozaki, head of the Fukushima prefectural fisheries association, told Nishimura.

Despite opposition from domestic experts, civic and fishery groups, Japan has been rushing to dump the contaminated water into the ocean, inciting protests from neighboring nations and communities within the Pacific islands.

In South Korea, about 2,000 fishermen and civic activists staged a rally in front of the National Assembly in Seoul on Monday against the plan to release toxic water.

The fishermen held signs that read "Desperately oppose the Fukushima radioactive contaminated water discharge into the sea," and "SOS!! Pacific Ocean!"

"If the Fukushima contaminated water is safe (as Japan claimed), it can be left in Japan's soil rather than be released into the ocean," said Kim Kwang-shik, one of the fishermen who joined the protest.

Leaders from Pacific island countries, including Fiji and Papua New Guinea, are also calling upon the Japanese government to immediately stop its plans for dumping nuclear wastewater into the Pacific.

According to a Research View survey of 1,000 South Korean adults conducted last month, 85.4 percent opposed Japan's nuclear-contaminated water dump, and 72 percent said they would reduce the consumption of marine products if radioactive wastewater is released.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Briefly

UNITED KINGDOM

Suspect arrested after 3 killed in Nottingham

Police arrested a man on Tuesday after three people were found dead and a van tried to mow down three others in Nottingham, central England, in incidents authorities believe are linked. Nottingham's center was cordoned off with a heavy police presence, following the series of events that left residents shaken. A 31-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of murder, police said. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak thanked emergency services who had dealt with the "shocking incident".

SYRIA

22 US troops injured in helicopter accident

A helicopter accident in northeastern Syria over the weekend left 22 US service members injured, the United States military said on Tuesday, adding that the cause of the accident was

under investigation and that no enemy fire was involved. The military statement said the service members were receiving treatment and 10 were moved to "higher care facilities" outside the region.

CUBA

3 dead, thousands displaced by storms

Three people have died and thousands have been evacuated after heavy rains pummeled eastern and central Cuba in recent days, authorities said on Monday. Heavy rains that started on Thursday had subsided by Monday evening, but recovery operations were still underway in several eastern provinces, including Holguin and Camaguey, as well as in Sancti Spiritus in the center of the island. "We are going to recover, no one will be helpless," President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez said on Sunday.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Celebration parade

Revelers from Alfama, a typical Lisbon neighborhood, parade in the streets before taking part in the Santo Antonio de Lisboa Parade on Avenida da Liberdade Avenue, Lisbon, Portugal, on Monday. Lisbon celebrates Feast of Saint Anthony, the city's protector saint, with a parade that gathers participants from several neighborhoods in the city.

PATRICIA DE MELO MOREIRA / AFP



Germany refuses Intel's call for increased subsidies

By JONATHAN POWELL in London
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Germany's Finance Minister Christian Lindner has refused demands from the United States-based computing giant Intel for increased subsidies concerning a new 17-billion-euro (\$18 billion) semiconductor factory in eastern Germany, saying the country's financial resources cannot support it.

The company had been slated to obtain 6.8 billion euros in governmental assistance for its manufacturing facility in the city of Magdeburg, but because of higher energy and construction costs, the multinational is now seeking about 10 billion euros, The Financial Times reported.

"There is no more money available in the budget," Lindner told the

newspaper. "We are trying to consolidate the budget right now, not expand it."

The project represents the most substantial foreign investment in Germany's postwar era and is considered crucial to the European Union's strategy to increase its global semiconductor market share, from its current position of under 10 percent to 20 percent by 2030, the newspaper said.

Last year, Intel revealed its selection of Magdeburg as the location for a new chip production facility that would be part of a massive \$88 billion investment effort across Europe, Reuters reported.

The initiative also encompasses the enhancement of an existing factory in Ireland, establishing a packaging and assembly site in Italy, and constructing a design and research center in France.

Some members of the German government, including Economy Minister Robert Habeck, hold the view that Berlin should attempt to match the considerable backing provided by the US government via its Chips and Science Act, The Financial Times said.

The legislation, implemented by US President Joe Biden's administration, allocates \$52 billion in funding to strengthen semiconductor manufacturing within the US.

Squandering resources

However, a number of economists in the eurozone's leading economy said that subsidies squander taxpayer resources.

There are also concerns that Germany's intention to reduce reliance on Asian suppliers might be unfeasible, because of the elaborate structure of supply chains

within the semiconductor sector, the FT noted.

Intel's request for additional funds has led to a division within the government, it added. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, a Social Democrat, and Habeck, a Green Party member, are thought to be receptive to offering further financial support, based on signals that Intel could potentially raise its overall investment.

Lindner, leader of the financially conservative Free Democrats, a minor party in Scholz's coalition, said he was "no great fan of subsidies".

"The chancellery and the economy ministry will have to show where the additional financing is to come from," he said.

In a short response to Lindner's remark, Intel told the FT that "there is a cost gap and we are working with the government on how to close it".

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WORLDUS

US retailers lose billions to surge in shoplifting

By MAYZHOU in Houston
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US retailer Target recently announced during its first quarter financial report that this year's profitability will be reduced by \$500 million more than last year from shrink — an industry term for losses from shoplifting by customers, employees and organized crime groups.

In 2022, Target lost \$800 million from inventory shrink. That means Target is expected to take a \$1.3 billion loss from inventory shrink for 2023.

"As we look ahead, we now expect shrink will reduce this year's profitability by more than \$500 million compared with last year. While there are many potential sources of inventory shrink, theft and organized retail crime are increasingly important drivers of the issue," said Target Chairman and CEO Brian Cornell.



While there are many potential sources of inventory shrink, theft and organized retail crime are increasingly important drivers of the issue."

Target CEO Brian Cornell

Walmart US CEO John Furner said in a recent financial report that shrink "has been really challenging" for the entire retail industry.

Mary Dillon, CEO of shoe retailer Foot Locker, recently said that shrink is "having an increased impact on Foot Locker."

According to the Financial Times, other retailers such as Home Depot and dollar stores including Dollar Tree said shrink had cut their gross margins by several basis points in the first quarter.

Shoplifting declined during the COVID-19 pandemic but is going up again. According to a 2022 retail security survey by the National Retail Federation, US retailers lost \$94.5 billion due to shrink in 2021, accounting for 1.4 percent of total revenue. More than 85 percent of respondents cited shrink as a real problem.

The situation is getting worse. "Based on what we're hearing already from many of these CEOs and based on what we're experiencing daily in retailers across the nation, I do foresee us to have a much higher loss in 2023," David Johnston, NRF vice-president of asset protection and retail operations, recently told FOX Business.

Johnson said the issue is a challenge for customers and

employees, and the shrink increase is especially driven up by the rise of organized retail crime (ORC) activities.

ORC increased by 26.5 percent in 2021. As a result, many retailers are boosting their budgets for loss prevention and technology, and 52.4 percent of respondents in the NRF survey said they are increasing budgets specifically for capital and equipment.

According to the Retail Industry Leaders Association, retailers face increased costs for lost product, security and labor due to ORC. The result is \$125.7 billion in lost economic activity and 658,375 fewer jobs.

Shoplifting is more serious at some drugstores in major cities like San Francisco and New York City, where many daily items like shampoos and razor blades are locked in cases.

Retail thefts hit a record level for the second year in a row in 2022 in the city, the New York Post reported. According to police data, the number of shoplifting complaints surged to more than 63,000 in 2022 — a 45 percent jump over 2021.

The shoplifting complaints were 37,838 in 2019 and dropped some during the pandemic. However, the number jumped to a record high of 43,675 in 2021, only to see it go higher in 2022.

Retailers have struggled to deal with the situation. A CVS store a few blocks south of Times Square has resorted to posting dogs and guards in the vestibule and outside the store to deter shoplifting, the New York Post reported.

The tactic seems to be working. The initial report of a five-day period showed that the K-9 unit prevented at least 25 thefts.

Some people are blaming the rise in shoplifting on lax laws and retailers have been asking local governments to impose stiffer penalties on shoplifters and especially on ORC.

Last year, California, Florida, Louisiana and North Carolina passed stiffer penalties for stealing from stores, primarily targeting ORC activities. At least 11 states are considering legislation that would more harshly punish people in ORC.

However, some critics of the legislative response say that decades of research on crime deterrence makes clear that a harsher approach won't have the desired effect and will exacerbate racial disparities, according to the Marshall Project, a nonprofit news organization focused on criminal justice.

"This is not a contested finding in the field of criminology," Jake Horowitz, director of Pew Charitable Trusts' safety and justice research, told the Marshall Project. "Even a severe sanction like a potential felony, in which you'll spend more than a year in prison, is not an effective deterrent."

Agencies contributed to this story.



Former US president Donald Trump waves to supporters at the Versailles restaurant on Tuesday in Miami, Florida. Trump earlier appeared in federal court on dozens of felony charges accusing him of illegally hoarding classified documents and thwarting the Justice Department's efforts to get the records back. ALEX BRANDON / AP

Trump hears document charges

Pleads not guilty in federal court in Miami to 37-count indictment, decries prosecution

By AIHEPING in New York
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Donald Trump on Tuesday became the first former US president to be arraigned on federal criminal charges when his lawyer pleaded not guilty for him in a downtown Miami courthouse to illegally keeping national security documents after leaving office, obstructing efforts to retrieve them and making false statements about the matter.

Trump arrived at the Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr courthouse in Florida in a motorcade of four black SUVs shortly before 2 pm for the 3 pm scheduled hearing. He rode to the courthouse with his son Eric from the former president's Doral resort. The car with Trump entered an underground garage at the courthouse.

Inside his motorcade, Trump posted social media broadsides against the prosecution insisting he has done nothing wrong and was being persecuted for political purposes.

Outside the courthouse, there were hundreds of supporters and anti-Trump protesters along with hundreds of journalists from around the world. Small groups of supporters and anti-Trump protesters occasionally exchanged obscenities.

Some supporters sang *Happy Birthday* to Trump who turns 77 Wednesday. They waved American flags, and some waved Trump 2024 flags, supporting his bid for president.

After the hearing, Trump flew to New Jersey, where he delivered

remarks at his golf club in Bedminster on Tuesday night.

"This is called election interference. ... This day will go down in infamy, and Joe Biden will be forever remembered as not only the most corrupt president in the history of our country but perhaps even more importantly the president who together with a band of his closest thugs ... tried to destroy American democracy."

"Never before have the two standards of justice in this country been more revealed," Trump said, in mentioning Biden's own possession of classified documents when he was vice-president. In free-wheeling remarks, Trump also brought up incidents involving classified information related to former president Bill Clinton and later his wife, Hillary Clinton, when she was secretary of state and the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate.

He also bristled at the prosecution's use of the Espionage Act, which he said has been used to "go after traders and spies."

In Miami, cameras were banned from inside the federal courthouse, but several reporters were in the courtroom with Trump, and more were in a nearby room watching on a closed video feed.

Trump was booked and escorted into a 13th floor courtroom where he sat with his arms crossed at the defense table while US Magistrate Judge Jonathan Goodman described the 37-count indictment. One of his lawyers, Todd Blanche, entered a plea on Trump's behalf.

"We most certainly enter a plea of not guilty," he said. Trump also was represented in court by Christopher

Kise, a former Florida solicitor general.

Trump faces 37 counts on seven different charges, including willful retention of national-defense information, withholding a record, false statements and conspiracy to obstruct justice. All relate to his handling of documents at his Mar-a-Lago resort, roughly 70 miles north of the courthouse.

Goodman ordered Trump not to have any contact with witnesses in the case — or his co-defendant Waltine "Walt" Nauta — as the case proceeds. Nauta also was charged last week by special counsel Jack Smith on six counts in the 44-page indictment about the case.

Blanche objected, saying that Nauta and other potential witnesses might be members of Trump's security detail or other staffers who rely on him for their livelihood. The facts of the case, Blanche said, revolve around "everything in President Trump's life."

The judge relented somewhat, saying that Trump shouldn't speak to Nauta or witnesses about the facts of the case. As to which Trump employees might be affected by the restriction, the judge instructed the prosecution team to provide a list.

Nauta and his lawyer sat separately from Trump and his legal team. Nauta appeared before the magistrate judge but didn't enter a plea. A lawyer for Nauta asked for a two-week extension because he needed a local lawyer to sponsor him.

Smith was in the room with three lawyers representing the Justice Department. They did not speak.

With the not guilty plea entered, the government will begin to reveal its evidence through the discovery process. Pretrial motions will be filed and argued. All of that will

likely take months.

The trial on the indictment charges will be overseen by Judge Aileen Cannon, a Trump appointee who has issued favorable rulings to Trump in the past and was randomly assigned to the case.

Cannon drew widespread criticism for her handling of the former president's civil case challenging the FBI's seizure of classified documents from Mar-a-Lago last summer.

A ruling in Trump's favor in that case was later overturned by an appeals court that was sharply critical of her legal reasoning.

Smith could either acquiesce to her overseeing the case or he could try to challenge her role and seek her recusal.

Trump, who has a big lead in polls for the 2024 GOP presidential primary, faces other legal trouble. Tuesday was the second time that he has been criminally charged since March when he was indicted in New York City on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records related to a hush-money payment.

He also faces ongoing investigations in Washington and Atlanta into efforts to undo the results of the 2020 presidential race.

Trump is the clear front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024 while 20 percent of likely GOP primary voters think he should be barred from serving as president if he is convicted in any of the 37 charges he faces, according to a CBS News-YouGov poll released Sunday.

Survey respondents said they are more concerned that the charges are politically motivated, as Trump asserts, than worried about his alleged conduct.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Talking NATO



US President Joe Biden meets with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington on Tuesday. Stoltenberg visited the White House amid questions on whether his term in Brussels will be extended. He is scheduled to leave at the end of September. JONATHAN ERNST / REUTERS

US regional airlines could be facing pilot shortage

By BELINDA ROBINSON
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US regional airlines could face a shortage of pilots because the airline industry will be hit with a huge number of pilots retiring at the same time, an industry group has warned.

More than half the pilots working today will be 65 years old in the next 15 years, the mandatory retirement age of a pilot in the US, and younger pilots aren't in place to ensure a smooth transition, say industry experts.

Regional airlines provide more than half the air service in 30 states and more than 75 percent of the air service in 15 states, according to the Regional Airline Association (RAA), which represents 18 airlines that operate 41 percent of the US scheduled passenger departures and employ 62,000 people.

A lack of pilots is already having an impact on regional airlines, the RAA said, as more than 500 regional aircraft are parked and aren't being used. That has affected 308 airports — 72 percent of all those in the US.

Larger airlines hired more than 13,000 pilots last year, and most came from small airlines, according to Faye Malarkey Black, president and CEO of the RAA. But while more pilots got their licenses last year than ever before, she said they can't fill the void.

Black told a House Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee hearing in April: "Without regional airlines, huge segments of the US population would not have access to scheduled, passenger air service without hourslong highway drives. For this reason, regional airlines play a crucial role in upholding transportation safety."

The RAA said that in 2021

approximately 123 million passengers traveled on a regional airline, an increase of 73 million from 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Despite soaring passenger demand, a worsening pilot shortage has hindered the regional airline industry's recovery from the pandemic and is decimating small community air service," Black said. "This shortage has been growing for decades, driven by the inability to create a sustainable pipeline of new pilots."

Over the last few decades, the main source of pilots for the airline industry has been the US military, but that supply has dried up.

Black said that it is "vital for Congress, the Biden administration and interested stakeholder groups to safely address the impacts the pilot shortage is having on our industry, passengers and communities."

The RAA chief also said she wants to see a reduction in the cost of pilot training, which can be from \$80,000 to more than \$200,000 if a person also gets a bachelor's degree.

Black said it also will be important for more women to apply to expand the number of pilots. Only 5 percent of pilots are women; the majority of pilots are white and male.

Jason Ambrosi, president of the Air Line Pilots Association, told the House subcommittee that some of the staff shortages have come about because pilots aren't paid enough. Figures from Labor Department showed that the median annual income for a pilot was more than \$200,000, in 2022.

He also suggested that the mandatory retirement age should be increased from 65 to 67 to help the situation.

BUSINESS

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HIGHER GROUND

PBOC cuts rates to boost growth

Move comes amid stepped-up efforts to consolidate recovery, hike confidence

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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China's central bank cut its short-term lending rate, the first such move since August 2022, as the country stepped up measures to consolidate economic recovery and restore market confidence amid downward pressure, analysts said on Tuesday.

Thanks to Tuesday's policy interest rate cut, the country's key benchmark lending rates for medium-term lending facility operations and loan prime rates are likely to see reductions over the following days,

which will help prop up credit demand and boost investor sentiment.

The People's Bank of China lowered interest rates for seven-day reverse repurchase agreements to 1.9 percent from 2 percent on Tuesday, after it injected 2 billion yuan (\$279.73 million) via the short-term liquidity instrument.

"This means the PBOC will almost surely deliver a 10 basis point, one-year MLF rate cut on June 15 and a similarly sized cut to the LPR on June 20," said Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura.

Meanwhile, Lu said his team

believes the impact of a moderate cut to benchmark lending rates will be quite small, and the country still has to do more over the rest of this year.

"We expect Beijing to ramp up transfers to local governments via an increase in the quota for special local government bonds, more lending quotas for policy banks and some direct funding from the PBOC," Lu said.

"To some extent, for the rest of this year, we expect Beijing to redeploy many of the financial tools that it used last year to maintain the functioning of local governments, bolster aggregate demand and eventually deliver on its 'around 5 percent' (annual) GDP growth target," Lu's views were echoed by Yao

Wei, chief economist and head of research for Asia-Pacific at Societe Generale, who expects to see reductions in MLF and LPR interest rates in the following days.

"This move is probably not going to be the last and we actually expect more rate cuts to come. These are pretty critical in stabilizing the housing market and industrial sector in the second half," Yao said.

Given factors including continued normalization of services, Yao said the recovery will likely pick up pace a little bit toward the end of the year, with an estimated full-year growth rate of 5.5 percent for 2023, higher than the country's preset annual growth target of around 5 percent.

Central bank data showed on Tuesday that China's new yuan-denomi-

nated loans totaled 1.22 trillion yuan in May, down by 617.3 billion yuan year-on-year, while China's broad money supply, or M2, stood at 282.05 trillion yuan by the end of May, up 11.6 percent from a year earlier.

The country's increment in aggregate social financing — the total amount of financing to the real economy — came in at 1.56 trillion yuan in May, down by 1.31 trillion yuan compared with the same period last year, the PBOC said.

Zhou Maohua, an analyst at China Everbright Bank, said the latest credit data came in below market expectations with a still-weak domestic demand, saying more stimulus policies may be needed to consolidate the recovery trend.

The National Development and

Reform Commission and three other central departments on Tuesday released a new document on reducing costs for companies to boost the real economy.

The document urged the financial sector to better serve the real economy, saying efforts will be made to promote declines in lending rates and business entities' financing costs while keeping them stable overall.

Yang Haiping, general manager of the Bank of Inner Mongolia's research and development department, said the LPR rate cut will to some extent help unleash consumption demand, boost investment and mitigate debt risks in some key fields.

Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China, said China still has ample space to step up macroeconomic policy support, and more monetary and fiscal stimulus measures to boost demand and shore up growth are expected going forward.

Decarbonization pacts of steel firms to bolster green transition drive

By ZHENG XIN
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China's steel industry, which has significant potential for decarbonization due to its large scale, presents massive opportunities for multinational corporations in mining, and the process will also further accelerate the global green transition, said industry experts.

In industry parlance, decarbonization refers to reduction or elimination of carbon dioxide emissions from processes like manufacturing or energy production.

As one of the largest producers and consumers of steel in the world, China has been actively exploring various strategies and technologies in decarbonization of the steel value chain, including improving energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable energy sources, said Zhu Yi, a senior analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence, a market monitor.

"Multinational mining companies like Rio Tinto, BHP and Vale can play crucial roles in supporting China's transition to a low-carbon steel industry, as China's steel mills rely on overseas suppliers for more than 70 percent of their iron ore needs," she said.

In recent years, mining companies have been stepping up investment and local cooperation in China for more green opportunities.

Rio Tinto, the world's largest iron ore producer, signed an agreement on Monday with State-owned China Baowu Steel Group, the world's top steelmaker, to explore a range of industry-leading projects in China and Australia to help decarbonize the steel value chain.

Under the agreement, the two companies plan to jointly advance specific decarbonization projects, including a pilot electric smelter at one of Baowu's steel mills in China, optimization of pelletization technology for Australian ore as a feedstock for low-carbon shaft furnace-based direct reduction and expanded development of China Baowu's HycroF technology. In addition, study opportunities for producing low-carbon iron in Western Australia will be explored.

In March, BHP signed an agreement with China's HBIS Group Co, one of the world's largest steelmakers, to pilot the carbon capture and

utilization technology. In April, Brazilian mining company Vale announced seven agreements with different Chinese partners to strengthen its relationship with China.

Alf Barrios, Rio Tinto's chief commercial officer, told China Daily: "The company sees great potential for further collaboration with Chinese partners and is willing to contribute to the industry's low-carbon transformation in the country."

"The decarbonization of iron and steel production will drive the biggest industrial transformation that has been witnessed in many decades."

"China's commitment to curbing emissions and promoting high-quality green development is strongly aligned with our own position where climate change and the low-carbon transition are at the heart of our strategy."

Barrios further said Rio Tinto's agreement on Monday aims to address one of the biggest challenges faced by the industry — developing a low-carbon pathway for low-to-medium grade iron ores that account for much of the global iron ore supply.

According to Bloomberg analyst Zhu, collaboration with mining MNCs could also enable Chinese steel mills to take into consideration the better-quality iron ore supply when designing their path to carbon emission cuts.

Zero-carbon steel production could be costly due to the higher operational, research and development and capital expenditures needed to replace existing facilities. Collaboration of domestic steel producers with mining MNCs will accelerate the decarbonization process of the steel industry, she said.

Lin Bogliang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, said by providing sustainably sourced raw materials and collaborating on R&D of innovative technologies, mining MNCs can help China's steel industry reduce its carbon footprint.

This collaboration can lead to new business opportunities and partnerships, as well as contribute to global sustainability goals, he said.



Students from a vocational school in Huzhou, Zhejiang province, learn how to operate robots in a local company. WANG SHUCHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

More pilot cities to fall under vocational education roadmap

By ZHU WENQIAN
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China will select a second batch of around 30 pilot cities to integrate the industrial and educational sectors in the second half of this year as the country aims for greater numbers of skilled craftsmen, according to a guideline released by the National Development and Reform Commission.

The NDRC and seven other departments jointly published the guideline last week on an implementation plan to empower and enhance the integration of industry and education through vocational education between 2023 and 2025.

The guideline aims to better integrate industry demand into the entire process of talent cultivation and continuously optimize the supply of human resources, it said.

The guideline encourages banking institutions to support industrial and educational integration projects and aid related enterprises.

Insurance companies may devise related insurance products, and the government will support eligible industrial and educational integrated enterprises to seek public financing.

"Implementing the guideline can help promote high-quality development of vocational education in China, and cultivate more highly skilled technical talent and

craftsmen for the building of a modern socialist country in all respects," Lin Yu, deputy director of the department of vocational and adult education at the Ministry of Education, said during a news conference at the NDRC on Tuesday.

From 2018 to 2022, national financial investments in vocational education reached 1.8 trillion yuan (\$251.7 billion), with an average annual growth rate of 6.2 percent, the NDRC said.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), the government will actively support the building of industrial and educational integration training bases through funds from the central budget.

For higher vocational colleges and application-oriented undergraduate colleges, the financial support shall not exceed 80 million yuan per school, and the support amount for each secondary vocational college shall not exceed 30 million yuan, the NDRC said.

Building a modern industrial system requires both top-notch scientists and highly skilled craftsmen rooted in the production lines. Due to their complex structure and numerous components, some cutting-edge fields such as aircraft engine manufacturing require a large number of skilled craftsmen from assembling engine blades to tightening screws, said Liu Ming, director of the social affairs department at the NDRC.

"Facilitating the integration of industrial and educational sectors through vocational education can help cultivate hundreds of millions of highly skilled talents, turn innovation into reality, and technology into productivity," Liu said.

Currently, China has more than 10,000 vocational colleges and over 30 million students. The scale of vocational education has already accounted for about half of China's higher education sector, indicating huge talent dividends. In recent years, the employment rates of graduates from secondary and vocational schools have exceeded 95 percent and 90 percent, respectively, according to the Ministry of Education.

"Vocational education has enabled more ordinary workers to join the middle-income group through their own efforts, playing an important role in ensuring people's livelihoods. It also serves as a form of employment education," Liu said.

In 2021, the government selected the first batch of 21 pilot cities for the integration of industrial and educational sectors and 63 enterprises for national industrial and educational integration.

As per the latest guideline, the government will summarize the experiences and practices of the first batch of pilot cities, and select another group of enterprises for national industrial and educational integration.

Trade expo returns off line at end-June

By WANG KEJU
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The 3rd China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo, scheduled to run from June 29 to July 2, will serve as an important mechanism for boosting China-Africa business cooperation and promoting high-level opening-up, officials said at a news conference on Tuesday.

Trade exchanges between China and Africa, which are highly complementary and mutually beneficial, strongly underpin the economic and social development of both sides and deliver benefits to the people of China and Africa, they added.

The event will resume all on-site activities in Changsha, capital of Central China's Hunan province, as the country optimizes its COVID-19 response measures, said Zhou Haibing, vice-governor of the province.

As of now, 53 African countries that have established diplomatic ties with China and eight international organizations have registered for the event, as well as 30 Chinese provincial regions and more than 1,500 domestic enterprises, Zhou said.

A wide range of activities will be arranged during the event, covering topics such as green infrastructure, Customs and quarantine, medicine and healthcare, agricultural products, light industry, industrial parks, women and youth as well as vocational education, he added.

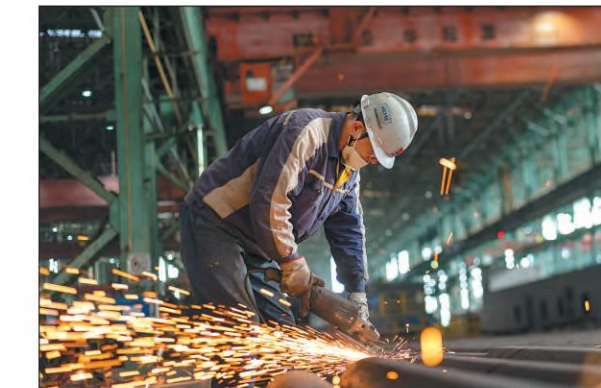
More than 1,350 exhibitors will participate in the event, attracting over 8,000 buyers and trade visitors, said Shen Yumou, director of the Hunan provincial commerce department, adding that some 100,000 individual visits are expected.

The China-Africa trade index will be released for the first time during the event. With a digital and scientific evaluation system, it will serve as a barometer for Chinese enterprises conducting economic and trade cooperation with their African partners, he added.

In addition to the event, China has been exploring more channels such as mobilizing trade promotion groups, harnessing e-commerce platforms and launching online shopping activities to bring more high-quality African products to the Chinese market, said Jiang Wei, director of the Department of Western Asian and African Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce.

China and Africa have seen economic and trade cooperation expanding rapidly in scale and value. Bilateral trade grew 11.1 percent year-on-year to \$282 billion last year, with imports from Africa amounting to \$117.5 billion, he said.

Local governments have played a more proactive role in advancing cooperation with Africa. Various localities of a fairly large economic size have rolled out well-focused policy measures and encouraged local enterprises to expand cooperation with African partners, he said.



An employee works at a plant of China Baowu Steel Group in Maanshan, Anhui province. LUO JISHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Zhejiang foreign trade grows robustly

Zhejiang province saw foreign trade volume rise 8.4 percent year-on-year to 1.98 trillion yuan (\$278 billion) in the first five months of 2023, according to Hangzhou Customs authorities. Exports from the East China province totaled 1.46 trillion yuan, up 8.8 percent year-on-year, while imports totaled

518.16 billion yuan, up 7.4 percent.

HSR section work progressing smoothly

The Wuhan-Yichang section of the Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu High-speed Railway, which links a number of city clusters along the Yangtze River and directly benefits some 600 million people, is showing good progress. A 221.7-meter-

long continuous beam traversing the Minle Canal, built by China Railway No 4 Engineering Group Co Ltd, has been completed using a cantilever intelligent bridge building machine, raising work efficiency by over 20 percent. The Wuhan-Yichang section is 315.571 kilometers long, allowing trains to run at 350 kilometers an hour.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS

Chongqing, SE Asia link freight route

New alternative cuts nearly half of time needed before, saves costs for traders

By TAN YINGZI and DENG RUI in Chongqing

Having run on the rails for 13 days, the first freight train serving a new route linking Chongqing municipality in Southwest China and Southeast Asian nations reached Padang Besar, Malaysia, on Thursday, with its compartments fully loaded with industrial products.

The arrival, announced by the route's operator on Monday, is seen as another milestone in enhancing ties with China's trading partners, especially the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. Prior to the opening of this route, freight took about 25 days for delivery as exports had to be sent to Shanghai first from other regions nationwide through the Yangtze River first, before reaching Penang, Malaysia by sea freight.

Now, with the addition of the International Land-Sea Trade Corridor (ILSTC), a major international logistics project participated in by China and some of its trade partners, the logistics time from inland provinces to Malaysia is cut by about half. "The operation of the new route not only enriches the logistics routes between Chongqing and Malaysia, but also helps cut logistics time and costs," said Gao Chenglin, sales manager of Yuxin'ou (Chongqing) Logistics Co, operator of the route.

According to the operator, cargo trains running on this route depart from Tuanjiecun Railway Station in Chongqing, head to the Laotian capital of Vientiane via the China-Laos Railway, then takes a rail route in Thailand before reaching Padang Besar at the northern Malaysia-Thailand border.

Launched in December 2021, the China-Laos Railway has witnessed continuous growth in passenger and freight transportation volume recently. Now, the railway has become a vital conduit between traders in 25 provincial-level regions and those in ASEAN markets.

The company is also providing customized follow-up delivery solutions for clients, such as door-to-door services, after freight trains arrive.

Chongqing, located on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, boasts key geographic advantages and is an

international logistics hub. The municipality is a strategic pivot point for national development programs in western regions and is a connecting point serving the Belt and Road Initiative and the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

In March 2011, the first freight train carrying electronics made in Chongqing started its journey on the Chongqing-Xinjiang-Europe express line. The link, more than 11,000 kilometers long, begins in Chongqing, crosses the border at Alashankou, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, and then passes through Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and Poland before reaching Duisburg, Germany.

The journey takes an average of 16 days, less than half the time of the maritime route, and makes inland Chongqing a gateway to Western markets.

The project was later adopted by many major Chinese cities and collectively referred to as the China-Europe Express.

In 2021, Yuxin'ou opened international railway trains from Chongqing to Laos, Thailand and Myanmar, and realized a seamless connection with the China-Europe Express in Chongqing, forming an international railway network that spans Europe and Asia.

Now China-Vietnam, China-Laos-Thailand and China-Myanmar international trains have become convenient channels for transportation in ASEAN and European markets, Gao said.

As a key project mapped out for the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), the ILSTC is a trade and logistics passage jointly built by provincial-level regions in western China and ASEAN member states.

The land-sea transit route is based on the efficient use of a variety of transportation modes, including railways, highways and waterways.

Over the past five years, the ILSTC's logistics network has connected Europe with Southeast Asia, with Chongqing as a key rail hub, and now reaches 393 ports in 119 countries and regions.

Contact the writers at tanyingzi@chinadaily.com.cn



A factory owner (left) addresses tax official queries on operations in Xinghua, Jiangsu province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Local tax bureau ups efforts to ease firms' burdens

By ZHENG YIRAN zhengyiran@chinadaily.com.cn

Local tax authorities are sparing no effort in aiding recovery at enterprises this year, as China forges ahead on a steady growth track.

Several local tax authorities are launching special tax incentives; for instance, the tax bureau in Xinghua, a county-level city in Taizhou, Jiangsu province, has set up a special channel — among other favorable taxation policies — targeted at companies to help them trace difficulties with regard to paying taxes and find solutions.

Jiangsu Xingyu Outdoor Leisure Products Co Ltd, which exports sports gear to overseas markets such as the United States, Russia and Denmark, is a local enterprise

that has received help from the local tax bureau.

In the past few years, amid rising material costs and the COVID-19 pandemic, the company faced difficulties in exploring overseas market opportunities and in product innovation.

Realizing that the company qualified for tax refunds, the Xinghua tax bureau notified it to prepare the necessary material for declaring such refunds, and provided precise on-site services, with a focus on giving guidance to impoverished employees and self-employed retired soldiers.

So far, it has helped the enterprise successfully apply for export tax exemptions worth 1.7 million yuan (\$238,000), as well as discounts worth 80,000 yuan.

Zong Fang, who is in charge of

the accounting department of Jiangsu Xingyu, said: "Offering tax incentives to specially recruited personnel is truly beneficial for labor-intensive enterprises like us."

"Staff members from Xinghua Bureau in Jiangsu Provincial Tax Service helped us to promptly sort out the applicable preferential policies, and provided guidance on the tax refund operation process. The tax refund was received on the same day of application, greatly ensuring turnover of funds and enhancing our confidence to further explore overseas markets."

Hong Yong, an associate research fellow at the e-commerce research department of the Ministry of Commerce, said favorable policies help export firms raise competitiveness

and operational efficiency, and reduce costs. "In addition, enterprises' confidence and development motivation are enhanced," Hong said.

Chen Zhenhui, senior partner of Jingsh Law Firm, said, "The policies help the taxation department strengthen the agglomeration effect of export enterprises within the region, promoting the recovery of trade."

Zou Chengping, who also works at the Xinghua tax bureau, said it will make full use of online channels to increase awareness about its export tax refund policies.

The bureau will also provide "one-on-one" precise guidance to enterprises, and quickly solve their problems, so as to help export firms better compete with global players.

Edwards Lifesciences puts heart into innovation

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

Edwards Lifesciences, which has introduced heart valve and critical care products to China over the past two decades, is confident in maintaining and even surpassing its current growth in the China market over the next few years, said a senior executive of the company.

A global leader in medical technology, the company has achieved, on average, double-digit growth in China, one of its most important strategic markets globally, over the past five years, said George Ye, general manager of Edwards Lifesciences Greater China.

"This was around the same growth pace globally but the China market has shown strong resilience," said Ye during an exclusive interview on Monday.

"We believe more growth opportunities will arise by riding the wave of China's economic development and grabbing the opportunities from a rise in medical needs and the needs of an aging population," he said.

Earlier this year, the company announced China as one of its seven major business regions. In July last year, it established a branch in Hong Kong, showing its confidence in China's economy and market.

"We'll further cooperate with the regional advantages of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and favorable policies to accelerate the introduction of more cutting-edge, high-quality innovative products to the Chinese mainland," Ye said.

In 2020, the company's transcatheter aortic valve system — Sapien 3 — was approved in China as the first such system imported by the country to help patients with aortic stenosis improve their prognosis and quality of life. It marked the landing of the transcatheter heart valve, the company's most important global business area, and business is being deepened continuously in the market.

Transcatheter procedures are minimally invasive surgeries that can be used to replace heart valves.

"Regarding the future of the valve sector, we look forward to introducing more innovative bio-

logical valve products, such as the RESILIA series of transcatheter and surgical biological valve products, into China, and laying out the sector of transcatheter therapy for mitral and tricuspid valves," said Ye.

"In the field of critical care, we'll take smart recovery equipment as the future development direction and apply emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data, to medical instruments," he said.

According to the Report on Cardiovascular Health and Diseases in China published by Beijing Fuwai Hospital in 2021, about 25 million people suffered from valve diseases. The risk of heart valve diseases increased from age 60 and one in eight individuals over 75 suffered from moderate to severe valve diseases.

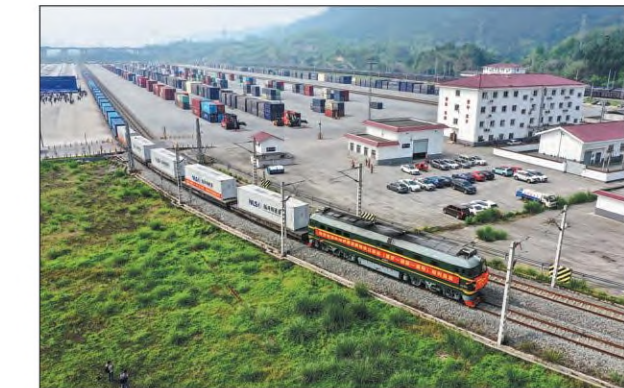
However, data from global consultancy Frost & Sullivan showed that the penetration rate of transcatheter aortic valve replacement in China is only 0.3 percent. In comparison, one in five eligible patients in developed countries receives such an operation within the same year.

While having more than 20 innovative products approved in China and having benefited over 1.5 million patients, the company has also facilitated international communication and multidisciplinary interactions in the field, said Ye.

"We've collaborated with more than 10 hospitals, including Beijing Fuwai Hospital and West China Hospital in Chengdu, Sichuan province, to conduct clinical cooperation to further improve the treatment level of cardiovascular diseases in the country," he said.

In response to the Health China 2030 Initiative, the company has collaborated with governments, associations, hospitals and research institutions to push its innovative technologies at the grassroots level.

"For example, we reached a strategic partnership with the Chinese Society of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesiology to improve perioperative hemodynamic monitoring techniques for clinical anesthesiologists, providing professional training for anesthesiologists at the grassroots level," Ye said.



A freight train departs from Chongqing for Myanmar in April. TANG YI / XINHUA

Maternity, baby goods seller in acquisition deal for growth

By WANG ZHUOQIONG wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

The recent acquisition plan of majority shares of Leyou by Kidswant, two major retailers in maternity and baby-related products, has signaled the further integration and consolidation of the sector to boost performance, as more parents prefer shopping online amid the consecutive drop in the newborn population in recent years.

Kidswant, a Nanjing, Jiangsu province-based maternity, infant and baby product chain, has plans to acquire 65 percent of shares in Leyou at the price of 1.04 billion yuan (\$145.2 million), which dominates the northern China market. The deal is pending approval from

the government department. Once the deal is approved, Leyou will operate as a subsidiary of Kidswant.

Kidswant, founded in 2009, had 508 direct-owned stores in 20 cities by the end of 2022, with its network mainly covering eastern China and some cities in Southwest and Central China.

Leyou runs about 494 direct-owned stores and 50 franchises by the end of 2022, covering the northern regions.

The acquisition is expected to expand Kidswant's presence in northern China, where the number of its stores is lower than 8 percent of its total. The deal is expected to fuel the synergy between the two companies in terms of market layout, operational model, supply chains,

distribution and logistics as well as digitalization.

Song Liang, a dairy analyst, said the shrinking maternity, infant and baby product market is a result of the decrease in births in the country, directly impacting the revenue for retailers who have generated profits from selling milk formula, diapers and maternity and infant care services.

According to figures from the National Bureau of Statistics, the total number of new births in China in 2022 was 9.56 million, a decrease of about 10 percent year-on-year, marking the sixth consecutive year of decline and nearly half of the 18.83 million new births in 2016. According to a report on the market insight of infant formula released by Niel-

senIQ in May, overall sales of categories related to mothers and infants decreased by 8 percent in 2022.

Over the years, e-commerce has become a popular trend for Chinese parents when ordering maternity and baby-related products. According to NielsenIQ, sales from online channels dropped 0.8 percent in 2022, while sales of brick-and-mortar stores have decreased 6.5 percent year-on-year.

The switch to online consumption among parents has further hurt the revenue and profit of brick-and-mortar retailers in the sector.

In 2022, Kidswant reached an income of 8.52 billion yuan, a year-on-year decrease of 5.8 percent, and a net profit of 120 million yuan, a year-on-year decline of 39.4 percent. In 2022,



A consumer checks out products at a Kidswant store in Huaian, Jiangsu province. ZHOU CHANGGUO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Leyou posted a revenue of 1.94 billion yuan, a drop of 6.3 percent compared to that of the prior year.

Recognizing the factors contributing to the declining revenue and

profit, such as limited offline traffic, Kidswant has improved and accelerated its online operations, which have contributed to nearly half its overall revenue in 2022.

BUSINESSFOCUS

Israel woos China again after curbs lifted

Mideast country welcomes 1.76 mln foreign visitors in first five months

JERUSALEM — Israel recently came up with a creative idea to reach more Chinese tourists: inviting online influencers to visit the country, as it tries hard to lure back tourists from one of its top 10 inbound tourism source markets before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in 2020.

“Israel is rich in tourism resources, including the magical Dead Sea and dynamic Tel Aviv. Israel is also a high-tech entrepreneurial country, and we warmly hope Chinese tourists will come to explore Israel,” Roy Kriezman, the China-based representative of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, said in fluent Chinese.

Kriezman accompanied a group of 10 famed Chinese vloggers (video bloggers) during a recent visit to the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation in Tel Aviv, the last leg of their weeklong trip organized by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.

The center, located on the Mediterranean coast with a breathtaking view of the blue sea, was founded in 1996 by former Israeli president Shimon Peres. The Nobel Peace Prize laureate has been popular among many Chinese for his peacemaking efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and for visiting China several times to promote Israel-China ties.

The center, which displays Israel’s leading technologies and innovations in many fields, has also become a window to showcase Israeli culture and innovations to the world.

This could be a strong appeal to Chinese tourists as the two countries established an innovative comprehensive partnership in 2017. The cooperation has become the highlight and driving force for boosting bilateral ties, as demonstrated by the joint creation of the China-Israel Changzhou Innovation Park and the China-Israel Shanghai Innovation Park.

During the tour by the Chinese vloggers, the Peres Center tried their utmost to make the visitors feel at home by translating the introductions in each showroom into Chinese.

“Welcome to the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation,” read a Chinese message, which flashed on a huge screen to greet the



An aerial view of the China-Israel Changzhou Innovation Park in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, in August. YANG LEI / XINHUA

Chinese guests.

Chinese elements were also evident in the office where Peres used to work on the top floor of the center. The vloggers took photos sitting in Peres’ chair at the office, which is decorated with a red-colored plate from China’s famed Tsinghua University and many Chinese books displayed on the bookshelf.

“This is my opportunity to invite all of you, every Chinese tourist, please come visit Israel, visit the innovation center. It will be an amazing experience, I assure you,” said Tamar Nitzan, innovation community leader of the Peres Center, as she guided the vloggers during their visit to the center.

Israel has seen a resurgence in inbound tourism since the start of this year, following the lifting of its COVID-19-related restrictions



People take photos with their phones during sunset on boardwalks in Tel Aviv, Israel, in May. ALEXI ROSENFELD / GETTY IMAGES

potential Chinese visitors to Israel. “Israel boasts a wealth of historical resources, while the latest technologies displayed in the museums also

provide an unprecedented experience,” she said.

Li Zimu, the China-based media manager of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, said the ministry is cooperating with major Chinese travel agencies and user-generated content sites to promote Israeli tourism in China, and “more influencers will be invited to discover the beauty of Israel”.

There has been a gradual resurgence in the number of “fully independent travelers” since travel restrictions were eased in China earlier this year, Li said.

Currently, 14 flights operate every week between Tel Aviv and Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, which can meet the demand of Chinese tourists visiting Israel, she said.

XINHUA

Cruise firm sets sail in Chinese mkt

AMSTERDAM — Viking Cruises, one of the leading cruise operators in the world, remains committed to the Chinese market and is taking steps to expand its businesses for Chinese customers, said Brendan Tansey, managing director of Viking Cruises China.

With the orderly resumption of outbound tourism from China this year, Viking Cruises has become the first cruise company to unveil plans to resume outbound European river cruise services for Chinese customers, Tansey said in a recent written interview.

On June 1, more than 100 Chinese tourists boarded a Viking cruise ship in Amsterdam in the Netherlands to embark on an 11-day journey along the Rhine River.

“After a three-year hiatus, Viking Cruises is delighted to welcome Chinese tourists in Europe once again,” he said.

“The resumption of European river cruise operations for the Chinese market reflects Viking Cruises’ unwavering dedication and a strong commitment to investing in China,” Tansey said.

Founded in 1997, Viking Cruises is a multinational company known for its luxury river and ocean cruises. The company officially entered the Chinese market in 2016, offering customized European river cruise services tailored for Chinese tourists.

According to Tansey, Viking



Chinese guests board the Viking Eistla cruise ship in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on June 1. XINHUA

Cruises has arranged two cruise ships to serve the Chinese market this year sailing on the Rhine River route, and plans to resume the Danube River route next year. Furthermore, it plans to launch more products to provide Chinese tourists with a wider range of choices.

Viking Cruises is also expanding its sea cruise business for the Chinese market, he said.

Tansey said Viking Cruises has already partnered with China Merchants Group’s subsidiary, China Merchants Shekou, to establish a joint venture called China Merchants Viking Cruises, aiming to create luxury cruise travel products together.

In March this year, China Mer-

chants Viking Cruises became the first cruise company in China to announce the resumption of international routes departing from its home port in China. On June 18, its luxury cruise ship dubbed *China Merchants Eden* will make its maiden voyage by taking Chinese tourists on a Japan loop route with Shanghai as its home port.

“Chinese travelers are increasingly appreciating the sense of value, quality and comfort during their journeys,” Tansey said. To cater to this, Viking Cruises focuses on destination experiences in their itinerary planning, provides full Chinese-language services throughout the journey, and continuously enhances the

XINHUA

Festival holidays to see surge in traveler numbers

By ZHU WENQIAN
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This year’s Dragon Boat Festival, which falls on June 22, is expected to continue the momentum of the May Day holiday and become the hottest such event for the domestic tourism market in five years, industry players have forecast.

Booking volumes for transportation and hotels for the three-day Dragon Boat holiday had boomed as of the first week of June.

Domestic destinations that are within two hours by high-speed train have been the most sought-after, according to Beijing-based online travel agency Qunar.

Travelers aged between 18 and 35 accounted for the largest proportion of those who plan to travel. Besides top-tier cities and some tourist spots, youngsters have been looking for cities famed for their delicacies that don’t cost much, like Zibo in Shandong province, Qunar has found.

Zibo’s barbecue became a viral topic on social media platforms, and attracted a large number of travelers during the May Day holiday.

Since June 5, fuel surcharges on domestic air tickets were reduced for the third time this year, following cuts in January and April. Fuel surcharges have been reduced to 20 yuan (\$2.8) for flights less than 800 kilometers

and 30 yuan for more than 800 kilometers, according to domestic carriers.

“Prices of domestic flight tickets for the Dragon Boat holiday are about 20 percent lower than those during the May Day holiday. Some even carry price tags that are lower than high-speed trains. The drop in fuel surcharges has also helped to lower the cost of traveling,” said Xiao Peng, a researcher at the big data research institute of Qunar.

“Besides, there won’t be that many tourists taking trips. Most cities will see smaller crowds compared with the May Day holiday, and thus be able to provide higher-quality services. Travelers will have a more economical and comfortable experience,” Xiao said.

Among those who did not travel during the May Day holiday, more than 80 percent plan to take trips next week.

Besides, with the conclusion of the national college entrance exams in early June, young Chinese are expected to take graduation trips, Qunar said.

Meanwhile, rising summer temperatures have fueled the popularity of some domestic coastal cities such as Qingdao and Weihai of Shandong province; Dalian, Liaoning province; Qinhuangdao, Hebei province; and Xiamen, Fujian province, according to data from on-demand service platform Meituan.

COMMENT

Editorials

Ever-expanding Entity List indicates the US is the real ‘coercion empire’

The US Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security announced it was adding 43 new entities under 50 entries to its Entity List on Monday, showing that the gestures Washington has made recently to supposedly try and mend ties with Beijing have been nothing but a put-on.

Not only are 31 of the 43 companies from China, but also the causes it gave for all the 43 entities from 10 countries in total being targeted are related to China. The BIS accuses them of playing certain roles in “human rights abuses” in China, contributing to ballistic missile programs of the People's Liberation Army and training the PLA Air Force's pilots on Western aircraft. Although as usual nothing has been offered to support the allegations.

The “charges” are typical US long-arm jurisdiction without any legitimacy. About 600 Chinese high-tech entities have been added to the Entity List since the previous Donald Trump administration. The list purportedly protecting “national security” is simply an excuse for the US' economic coercion.

Considering the US has been trying to hype up China's “economic coercion” as a global threat for the past months, the founding of the ever-growing list shows which country is the inventor, patent holder and executor of economic coercion.

As US Deputy Secretary of Commerce Don Graves' remarks about the latest move indicate, the

US Commerce Department regards the Entity List as “one of the most powerful policy tools we have at our disposal”.

In the meeting between Chinese and US commerce ministers on May 25, which the US side had looked forward to and managed to arrange at last on its soil after obtaining the Chinese side's consent, the two sides agreed to build communication channels so as to keep and strengthen exchanges on concrete trade concerns and cooperation matters.

However, the great lengths the US side has gone to this time — targeting the other 12 enterprises from nine countries in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa, all important partners of China, as well for China-related “issues” — should have driven home to the rest of the world the true meanings of the “rules-based order”, “competition” and “de-risking” that Washington is pushing for.

By cutting off all means of retreat for even those refusing to jump onto its anti-China wagon, it is crystal clear who is coercing the world for its own narrow ends.

The US now regards the harm it is causing to global industry and supply chains by weaponizing trade and technology as a price the world has to pay for its geopolitical game to maintain its hegemony.

As long as the US continues to base its own security on the insecurity of others, it will remain a source of confrontation and conflict.

UNESCO move shows Washington's arrogance

For years the United States has been the world's sole superpower. This has spoiled politicians in Washington. They take it for granted that it is an unquestionable prerogative of the US that it should have an absolute say in United Nations organizations simply because of that status.

Being the world's largest economy, the US is also the biggest funder of the organizations. This is regarded by the politicians in Washington as a leverage to ensure the organizations are pliable to the US' diktats.

That is why the US has withdrawn from UNESCO, twice, as well as the UN Human Rights Council and the World Health Organization when it has taken umbrage with them.

Similarly, it has also quit the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and the Paris Agreement, although it has now rejoined the latter.

With such a mindset the politicians in Washington refuse to accept that the world is becoming increasingly multipolarized, and it is natural and fair for emerging countries to have a greater say in global affairs and demand a fairer world order.

It is not fair for the US to have the absolute say over global affairs in UN organizations, where international affairs of concern to all countries should be decided by vote. Countries, small or big, have equal status in the UN and its organizations.

But Washington remains stubbornly willful as

shown by the announcement of UNESCO that the US plans to rejoin the UN cultural and scientific agency. That decision has reportedly been motivated by concerns that China is filling the gap left by the US in UNESCO.

This is the second time the US will rejoin the organization having withdrawn in a fit of pique. In 1984, the US quit, citing mismanagement and an anti-US bias. Having rejoined in 2003, the Donald Trump administration again withdrew the US from the organization in 2017 because Palestine was included by vote as a member.

To be frank, the presence of the US in UNESCO and other UN organizations is important for concerted global efforts to address challenges of great concern to the future of humanity.

But whether the US will play a positive role in the agency remains a conjecture. If, as its official says, its return is just for regaining its own influence against that of China in the organization, the US will likely just be a troublemaker.

China's ambassador to the agency has expressed the hope the move means that Washington is serious about multilateralism. He said that being a member of an international organization is a serious issue, and it is hoped that the return of the US this time means it acknowledges the mission and the goals of the organization.

Other members of the agency share that hope.

Sino-Arab engagement not zero-sum game

With reportedly more than 3,500 government and business officials from China and Arab countries participating, and \$10 billion in investment agreements signed on its first day, the 10th Arab-China Business Conference was illustrative of the thriving relationship between the two sides.

Hosted by Saudi Arabia, co-organized by the Arab League and China, the event sought to enhance the strategic partnership based around the Belt and Road Initiative, according to Saudi media. Just as the agreements signed in Riyadh indicate, the partnership is reaching far beyond oil as a traditional energy source to such fields as technology, agriculture, renewable energy and tourism.

As an interesting particular of this change, the host country signed a \$5.6 billion deal with a Chinese company to manufacture electric vehicles locally.

This will certainly add to the concerns of some outside observers about the geopolitical implications of the rapidly widening and deepening engagement between China, Saudi Arabia and the broader Arab world. It will even spur some parties to make greater efforts to suppress the momentum in the cooperation out of their anxieties that China is exploiting the strategic vacuum the West has left behind in the Middle East.

But while they see the matter through the prism of “major power strategic competition” and “sys-

temic rivalry”, the Saudi government has made it crystal clear that it has no interest in the West-led geopolitical game.

As Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman clarified, his country prioritizes business interests. He said the country totally ignores criticism from that perspective. Businesspeople “will go where opportunity comes their way”, he noted, and China is where there are opportunities to be seized.

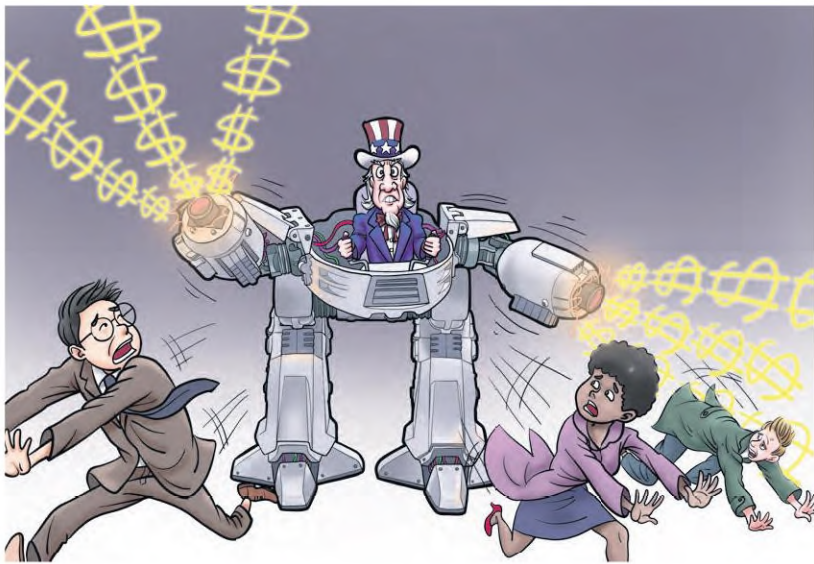
“There is nothing political about it, there is nothing strategic about it,” he said, stressing Saudi Arabia doesn't have to be engaged in a zero-sum game.

Unlike some in the West who are keen on making allies and partners take sides between them and China as an alleged strategic rival, the Saudi official does not believe such relationships should be mutually exclusive. Speaking of the thriving trade ties and expanding realms of cooperation with China, he stated, “This doesn't mean we're not going to collaborate with others”.

There is nothing unusual about the world's largest crude oil exporting country cooperating with the largest importer. And the two countries are engaging more closely in broader areas because the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative aligns well with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which in itself is a transformative economic and social reform blueprint.

Most importantly, their cooperation is driven by the opportunities they see in each other.

Jin Ding



Opinion Line

Nuclear arms increasing globally, but Western media sees only China

In its annual report published on Monday, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said the world's nuclear weapons states are pushing to expand their nuclear arsenals, warning that the number of nuclear weapons that can be deployed is increasing.

Expectedly, the Western media, which has always hyped China's “military threat”, blamed China for the rise in the number of nuclear warheads. The Voice of America even sensationalized it by using a headline saying “China expands nuclear arsenal amid rising global tensions”. The report says several countries, notably China, increased their nuclear arsenals last year as geopolitical tensions were rising.

The SIPRI report summarizes the changing trend of global nuclear arsenals, but it does not name China alone. Its wording is different from that used by US media outlets,

which seem to be singling out China. Although The Guardian report did not seem to target China, it carried a picture of missiles on public display during Chinese military parades.

As a big country with a vast territory and many core interests, China undoubtedly needs sophisticated weapons to ensure its national security. However, China has always maintained a restrained and limited nuclear deterrence capability. In fact, despite being a large country, China does not believe in the bigger the better when it comes to its nuclear arsenal. An appropriate increase in its nuclear arsenal is not only acceptable, but also reasonable, legitimate and necessary. After all, from the perspective of military equipment development, it is necessary for China to develop a certain number of modern delivery vehicles, which requires corre-

sponding modern warheads.

However, it should be noted that from the perspective of the international environment and regional situation, it is a general trend that nuclear powers, including China, will modernize and update their nuclear arsenals. At the same time, the scale of their nuclear arsenals will not only increase, but also realize the replacement of old models with modernized and updated ones.

It is not objective that Western think tanks and research reports blindly exaggerate the “expansion” of China's nuclear arsenal. They only presuppose an outcome, and then use the so-called objective algorithms and data to deduce the “conclusions” they want to get, and try to use these conclusions to force China to sit at the arms reduction negotiation table.

— SHUMIYUAN SHIHAO WECHAT ACCOUNT

Joke using tragedy is most unbecoming

Talk shows are often about having fun using offense. Even so, American-Singaporean Jocelyn Chia seems to have gone too far with her insensitive joke alluding to MH370, the ill-fated Malaysian Airlines flight that went missing in 2014 and has never been found.

She cracked the joke in New York's Comedy Cellar Club in April. It was when the club posted a video of the joke on social networking sites that it sparked an uproar in Malaysia, forcing Singapore's foreign affairs minister to issue an apology “to all Malaysians for her hurtful remarks”.

Talk shows are a welcome stress

buster for people who lead high-pressure lives. Yet that doesn't mean such shows should not be governed by rules to ensure the players do not offend someone.

Making jokes about the inhabitants of Capitol Hill or the White House is never a problem as these are powerful people who couldn't care less. In fact, it might sometimes force them to see where they are going wrong and try to make amends.

However, it is unbecoming of a comedian to be insensitive to tragedies such as the MH370 case while cracking jokes. How would a relative of a passenger who was on that

flight react to the “joke”? It would reopen old wounds and make them relive the trauma. What exactly was Chia's intention while cracking the joke? She sure needs to be cautious with how she uses words in the future, and avoid rubbing salt on people's wounds.

Chia, who refuses to apologize for her joke even after Twitter suspended her account, should learn from Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, who stressed that Singapore cherishes its relationship with Malaysia. The minister showed a way of how to handle sensitive relations. Chia needs to learn that skill.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Practical problems plague marriage rate

The number of marriage registrations nationwide plummeted to 6.83 million last year from 7.64 million in 2021, according to the data recently released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. That was a new low since 1986 and almost half of that nine years ago. At the same time, it is estimated about 2.1 million couples divorced last year.

The decline in the number of marriages last year was in the first place caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has seriously affected the economy as well as people's lives.

But it is also related to changes in the population base. The birth rate of China started declining since the 1990s. According to the seventh census, although the population of the country swelled from 1.08 billion in 1986 to 1.41 billion last year, the size of the population aged 20-40 has shrunk markedly during that period of time, and the society is aging fast.

Meanwhile, it must be seen that high house prices, living expenses

and work pressure are also reducing people's willingness to marry and have children. These have been called the best contraceptive. In 2020, the national average age of first marriage was 28.67 years old, compared with 24.89 years old in 2010.

Despite this, from a worldwide perspective, it can be said that the more developed a country is, the lower the marriage rate is. According to OECD data, from 1995 to 2019, the marriage rate in the United States fell from 8.9 to 6.1 marriages per 1,000 people, and in Japan from 6.4 to 4.8 marriages per 1,000 people.

As such, on the one hand, the reduction of China's marriage rate is to some extent a reflection of the country's social and economic progress as well as people's changing perceptions of marriage.

On the other hand, a long-term low marriage rate will unavoidably affect the balanced development of China's population and socioeconomic development. How to check

the fast fall of the marriage rate deserves attention of all parties in society.

It is good to see that the newly revised Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women stipulates that employers shall not restrict female employees from promotion or reduce the wages and welfare benefits of female employees due to marriage, pregnancy, maternity leave, breastfeeding and other circumstances.

Yet that's far from enough to reverse the trend as a whole. Authorities at various levels should resolve the practical problems causing the low marriage rate by effectively bringing down the costs of housing, education, childbirth and parenting so as to form a favorable social and institutional environment for marriage and childbearing.

None of these is an easy task as they are all structural and systemic, entailing a paradigm shift in the overall development model of the country.

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COMMENT



China and the World Roundtable | Japan's Nuclear-contaminated Water Dump

Editor's note: Japan's attempt to release the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean will not only violate international law but also its own domestic laws. The decision shows the Japanese government and the Japanese company that owns the destroyed Fukushima nuclear plant stand together in making the whole world suffer the consequences of Japan's action. Two experts share their views on the issue with China Daily.

Shaun Burnie

Fukushima plan a nuclear threat to Asia-Pacific

Japan has decided to start discharging radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean very soon. The operator of the wrecked plant began tests on Monday of the newly constructed facilities for discharging treated radioactive wastewater into the sea. Many myths and untruths have been spread about the nuclear-contaminated water. For example, the Japanese government has said, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the global nuclear industry and some scientists, there is nothing to worry about the effects of the radioactive wastewater.

The Japanese government also claims that nearly all the radioactive materials will be removed from the wastewater using the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) with only tritium remaining before it is released into the Pacific. It is constantly stated that tritium cannot be removed from the wastewater but would emit very weak radiation and therefore it will have no impact on either the marine environment or human health in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

False claims to mislead the Japanese public

As for Tokyo Electric Power Company, the owner of the Fukushima nuclear plant, it claims discharging the wastewater is necessary due to insufficient space for more storage tanks and for it to be able to fully decommission the Fukushima plant between 2041 and 2051. TEPCO also says the discharges will meet regulatory standards and will be lawful.

In the real world, it is a lot worse and a lot more complicated than what TEPCO, the Japanese government and the IAEA claim. The ALPS has been a spectacular failure, with major doubts about its effectiveness. In addition to tritium, all the radioactive carbon (C-14) in the wastewater will be released into the ocean along with many other radionuclides (plutonium isotopes, iodine-129, strontium-90). But despite the Japanese government and TEPCO "planning" to keep them below the regulatory limit, they will still be significant.

There is no safety threshold for artificial radioactivity in the environment, and technology does exist to process tritium from the tanks' water. However, TEPCO and the Japanese government do not want to spend huge amounts of money needed to do so. Tritium is indeed a low-energy radioactive material but that does not mean its effect is weak; if ingested, it has the potential to damage plants, animals and humans.

Recent research published by a leading radiation biologist shows scientific literature of the past 60-plus years is clear — tritium, in particular organically bound tritium (OBT), is biologically harmful to all forms of life. The persistence, bioaccumulation and potential biomagnification and increased toxicity of OBT increases the potential impact on the environment if tritiated water is discharged on land or in the sea.



The author is a senior nuclear specialist with Greenpeace East Asia and has worked in Japan and wider Asia for over 30 years.

Tritium more dangerous than previously believed

None of the current regulations in Japan (or worldwide) takes into full account the nature of organic forms of tritium. That organic forms of tritium have been found to bioaccumulate in phytoplankton, the base of the marine food chain, is deeply worrying. The fact that there has been no comprehensive environmental impact assessment of these and many other issues is outrageous, and suggests there is a deliberate underestimation of the accumulation and potential toxic effect of tritium on the environment.

Equally important, the many other radioactive materials in the Fukushima wastewater have the potential to cause damage to the environment and human health. In fact, Japan has sufficient storage capacity, including in the areas around the Fukushima plant. And storing the toxic wastewater, TEPCO cannot fully decommission the reactors at Fukushima in the next 20-30 years — probably not in this century. Rather than being lawful, the release of the wastewater into the sea will violate international law, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

One reason why the untruths and myths continue to be spread is that there is a lot at stake for the Japanese government and the nuclear industry. Japan's energy policy is dependent on restarting many nuclear reactors shut down after the 2011 Fukushima disaster. So far, nine have resumed operations — but according to government policy, Japan needs 30-plus reactors by 2030.

Public opinion in Japan has been influenced by the government's claim that it is safe to operate these nuclear reactors and that it is possible to recover from a three-reactor meltdown without consequences for human health and the environment. Of course, it's not.

Sweeping real issue under the carpet

TEPCO, the Japanese government or the IAEA refuse to accept that the wastewater crisis points to a deeper nuclear crisis at the Fukushima plant. And it is getting worse, because groundwater entering the plant continues to become highly contaminated, while the water in the tanks requiring

ALPS processing increases.

In November 2021, based on TEPCO data, there were 1,284,284 cubic meters of contaminated ALPS water in the storage tanks, of which 832,900 cu m needed further ALPS processing. As of April 20, 2023, the total volume of radioactive wastewater stored in the tanks was 1,330,944 cu m — a 3.6 percent increase in less than 2 years.

Worse, about 70 percent or 931,600 cu m of the wastewater needs to be processed again (and probably many times again) by the ALPS to bring the radioactive concentration levels below the regulatory limit for discharge. This is an increase of nearly 12 percent in less than 2 years.

TEPCO has succeeded in reducing the concentration levels of strontium, iodine and plutonium in only 0.2 percent of the total volume of the wastewater, and it still requires further processing. But no secondary processing has taken place in the past nearly three years. Neither TEPCO nor the Japanese government nor the IAEA wants to talk about this. They have not said how many times the wastewater needs to be processed, how long it will take to do so or whether the efforts will ever be successful.

Problems not new but none solved in 5 years

Greenpeace wrote about these problems and why the ALPS failed nearly five years ago; none of those issues has been resolved. Also, there is a high possibility of

the ALPS failing in the future.

To proceed with their discharge plan, the Japanese government and TEPCO have been creating a false impression on the public that significant progress has been made in decommissioning the Fukushima plant. But the fact is, the source of the problem — the highly radioactive fuel debris in reactor pressure vessels 1, 2 and 3 — continues to contaminate groundwater. Nearly 1000 cu m of water becomes highly contaminated every 10 days. So until the nuclear fuel is isolated from the environment, contaminated groundwater, potentially hundreds of thousands of cubic meters, will continue to accumulate.

While the Fukushima plant, after being destroyed by the earthquake-triggered tsunami in March 2011, released large amounts of radioactive particles into the environment, most of the radioactive inventory remains inside the melted fuel. As such, the damaged Fukushima plant on the edge of the ocean is a long-term radioactive threat to the environment, including the marine environment. And this threat will be aggravated once Japan begins dumping the toxic water into the ocean.

TEPCO, the Japanese government and the IAEA refuse to acknowledge the fact that the decommissioning plan for the Fukushima plant is not attainable, and that they must embark on a comprehensive reassessment of the plan.

Crisis compounded by damage to reactor

The nuclear crisis in Fukushima is compounded by the damage to the reactors, in particular unit 1. The rapid meltdown of the nuclear fuel in March 2011 severely damaged the large concrete block the 440-ton reactor pressure vessel sits on. One of the agencies responsible for its decommissioning has recently demanded that TEPCO work out immediate countermeasures to prevent the possible collapse of the reactor. But with very high radiation levels inside the plant, it's not clear whether any countermeasures are possible.

Building a very large containment structure covering the reactor buildings, like it was done at the Chernobyl plant in Ukraine after the nuclear disaster in 1986, is probably the only way to prevent highly radioactive dust entering the lower atmosphere in the event of a future collapse. But such a "solution" is currently not an option for the Japanese government or the nuclear industry, as it would send the wrong message that the decommissioning process is not going according to plan.

There is no scientific, legal or moral justification for Japan to deliberately contaminate our shared and common marine environment. And concerned citizens, scientists, maritime lawyers, the fishing communities across the Asia-Pacific and the world's leading oceanography universities and institutes have spread public awareness about the nuclear dangers, something that has rarely been done before.

There is a very strong legal case for challenging Japan's decision to dump the wastewater into the sea but doing so is a major undertaking. For many reasons, no state or group of states may take up the challenge through UNCLOS this year. But since the environmental threat from the Fukushima plant will only intensify, future legal action should not be ruled out.

At a time when our oceans are under so many multiple threats, including from melting glaciers and related climate emergencies, overfishing and biodiversity loss and plastic pollution — there is no reason why Japan should be allowed to dump the radioactive water into the sea.

Greenpeace has been campaigning for protection of our oceans from radioactive contamination since the 1970s. And the most important thing I have learned in my 30 years with Greenpeace is that positive change is possible even if it does not often happen as early as it should but it can happen and people must never give up their efforts or hope.

The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Yin Xiaoliang

Japan's toxic water dumping will damage marine ecosystem

The Japanese government announced in January that it would start releasing the radioactive contaminated water from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the Pacific Ocean this spring or summer. Japan took this unilateral, irresponsible decision without holding any discussions with parties that could suffer the consequences of its action, especially because the contaminated water could cause serious damage to the marine environment and ecology, human health and seafood.

The international community therefore should stop Japan's attempt to present its contaminated water discharge plan as scientific and safe.

To win domestic support for dumping the radioactive water into the ocean, the Japanese government has set up an 80 billion yen (\$580 million) fund to deal with the potential effects of its action on the fishing industry, of which 50 billion yen is to be used to subsidize soaring fuel costs and another 30 billion yen to store seafood.

Instead of solving the problem, the Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company, the Fukushima nuclear plant owner, have been trying to skillfully steer



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public opinion on their side using various public relations stunts. They have released advertisements on TV, online platforms, and in newspapers — they have also put ads at railway stations — to promote their claim that it's "safe" to discharge the toxic water into the ocean. Their PR exercise has also targeted overseas students.

Unfortunately, the campaign seems to have been received well in Japan. For example, an Asahi Shimbun survey on March 18-19 showed that 51 percent of the respondents support the government's plan, with 41 percent opposing it. Cunningly, the Japanese government has been using the term "treated water" to refer to the nuclear-contaminated wastewater, in order to downplay its radioactive characteristics and potential hazards with the

aim of confusing the public.

Japan's aggressive publicity has also reached the Pacific island countries. Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi paid an official visit to the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and the Cook Islands from March 18 to 22 in a bid to ease international pressure on Tokyo or at least muffle as many opposing voices as possible.

But despite the Japanese government trying to divert global attention from the potential harm the toxic wastewater can cause to the marine environment and ecology, it has not achieved its goal. One of Japan's latest moves to seek international support is an attempt to include statements such as the G7 member states have "welcomed" its approach to the release of the radioactive contaminated water into the sea. However, the attempt has apparently failed because the G7 summit's joint statement did not include any endorsement of Japan's plan. Instead, it said the G7 group supports the International Atomic Energy Agency's independent review to ensure the discharge process is in line with the IAEA's safety standards.

Earlier, the G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment had

squashed Japan's hope of securing unanimous support from the G7 for its planned wastewater discharge after Germany opposed it.

Yet the Japanese government has not given up its efforts to garner emotional support and create a favorable public opinion on its wastewater dumping plan. Although Tokyo is sparing no efforts to whitewash its toxic plan, the international community should understand the potential damage the radioactive wastewater could cause to human health, seafood, and the marine environment and ecology. In fact, the nuclear-contaminated water contains more than 60 radionuclides including tritium, carbon-14, cobalt-60, strontium-90 and iodine-129, which are hard to filter and will damage the digestive, nervous, cardiovascular and immune systems of humans, and even cause leukemia if ingested.

Besides, radionuclides are a threat to marine life. The radioactive wastewater, if released into the sea, will first deal a big blow to Japan's fishing industry and then poison seafood across the Pacific and other oceans. Also, the balance among marine species is closely related to their numbers, availability of food and growth. Radionu-

clides will change this balance, leading to the extinction of some species and destabilizing the entire marine ecosystem.

In accordance with general international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Japan should inform and consult with countries that may be affected, and assess and monitor the environmental impact of the radioactive wastewater, cooperate with the international community, and take every possible measure to prevent contaminating the marine environment. But instead of doing that, Tokyo has been shunning its responsibilities using different pretexts.

Actions like the one Japan has decided on have had a negative impact on global governance, and could encourage some other countries to do the same. So the international community should ask Japan to halt its dumping plan till it provides further scientific proof of the safety of its contaminated water release plan, and carry out unbiased studies to assess the environmental impacts of the Fukushima plant's toxic water on marine life and ecology.

The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS

YANG YANLONG Crisis control

Fast-response Asian Monetary Fund could be created with the integration of two existing mechanisms

As the unprecedented harsh financial sanctions on Russia have triggered concerns about the weaponization of the US dollar, the global trend of de-dollarization is accelerating. Many countries are seeking to reduce or break free from dependence on the US dollar, by reducing holdings of US debt, diversifying foreign exchange reserves, and promoting non-dollar transactions.

Despite expanding their currency cooperation, emerging economies and developing countries in Asia still rely on the US dollar in trade, investment and loans, creating three risks for the Asian economy.

The first risk is major external impacts caused by negative spillover effects of US monetary policy, inflation crises in the eurozone, and geopolitical conflicts. The second is internal risks as a result of poor macroeconomic policies, fragility in the financial sector, and high accumulated public and private debt. And third, there is "path dependency" due to a lack of coordination among countries in policy dialogue, economic supervision and crisis management.

In the face of these risks, Asian countries urgently need the establishment of a comprehensive loan toolbox, cross-border monitoring mechanism and risk response system to carry out effective regulatory cooperation and crisis relief.

Autonomous and flexible currency and financial cooperation mechanisms are called for that can provide a secure and stable settlement system for developing economies. Asian economies also want to gain more say in the global economic govern-

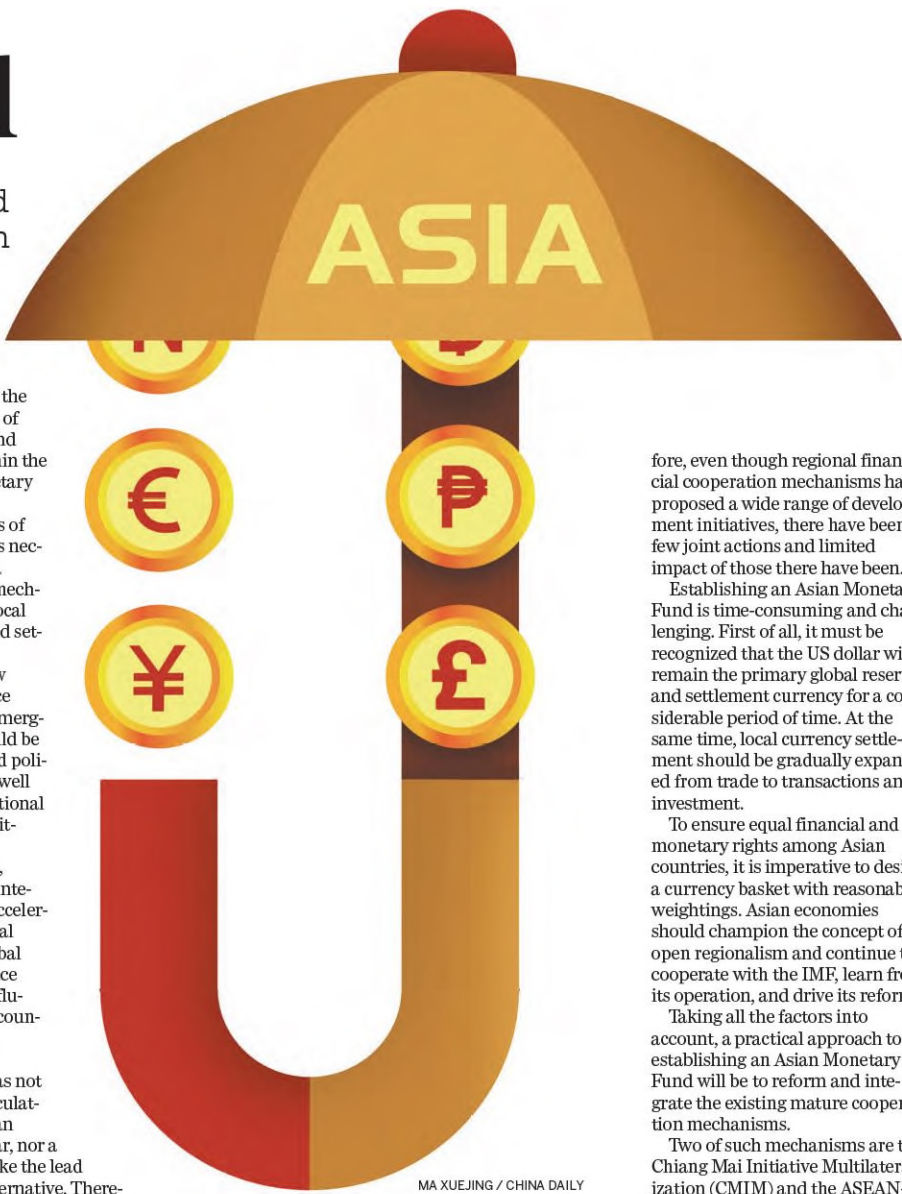
ance system which requires improving the long-standing issue of low voting power and representation within the International Monetary Fund.

To meet the needs of Asian countries, it is necessary to establish a mutual assistance mechanism as well as a local currency pricing and settlement system.

In addition, a new financial governance model focused on emerging economies should be built, with improved policy coordination, as well as increased institutional capacity and commitments.

Last but not least, regional economic integration should be accelerated to support equal participation in global economic governance and enhance the influence of developing countries and emerging economies.

Currently, Asia has not yet seen a freely circulating currency that can replace the US dollar, nor a "core country" to take the lead in promoting an alternative. There-



fore, even though regional financial cooperation mechanisms have proposed a wide range of development initiatives, there have been few joint actions and limited impact of those there have been.

Establishing an Asian Monetary Fund is time-consuming and challenging. First of all, it must be recognized that the US dollar will remain the primary global reserve and settlement currency for a considerable period of time. At the same time, local currency settlement should be gradually expanded from trade to transactions and investment.

To ensure equal financial and monetary rights among Asian countries, it is imperative to design a currency basket with reasonable weightings. Asian economies should champion the concept of open regionalism and continue to cooperate with the IMF, learn from its operation, and drive its reforms.

Taking all the factors into account, a practical approach to establishing an Asian Monetary Fund will be to reform and integrate the existing mature cooperation mechanisms.

Two of such mechanisms are the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) and the ASEAN+3

Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO), both constructed by ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

The CMIM is a multilateral financial safety net, while the AMRO provides macroeconomic monitoring and technical support. At present, the two institutions operate independently, which restrains the effectiveness of the mechanisms and leads to a set of problems such as decentralized management of foreign exchange reserve pools, and a limited amount of aid with linkage to IMF conditionality.

When countries need urgent financial assistance, they are more likely to turn to bilateral mechanisms or the IMF. However, during the Asian financial crisis, loans provided by the IMF, the lender of last resort, not only came with stringent conditions, but also turned out to be inadequate and delayed in timing.

Therefore, it is necessary to integrate these mechanisms to create an entity with a centralized fund, legal status and permanent institutions. The reformed organization will be able to manage foreign exchange reserve pools within the region, build up the size of the fund, enhance crisis relief capabilities, and reduce excessive reliance on bilateral assistance mechanisms and the IMF.

Furthermore, the integrated organization will be able to better manage economic risks and loans, monitor capital flows, and evaluate the development of financial markets. With a better understanding of the economies within the region, it can provide rapid aid at the onset of a crisis, which would not only prevent local issues from escalating into cross-regional crises, but also complement the IMF loans, which are usually provided at a later stage. With loans and relief policies tailored to the region, developing countries will gain better access to urgent financial support in times of need.

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GULNAR SHAIMERGENOVA

Seizing the opportunities

Enhanced cooperation with China has been an essential choice for the Central Asian countries

The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative was welcomed by Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries being a logical continuation of more than 20 years of regional cooperation.

As the most politically stable country in Central Asia, Kazakhstan launched reforms aimed at creating conditions for attracting investors earlier than others, demonstrating its political and economic will to become a long-term reliable partner in the initiative.

In addition to its strategic location in the heart of Eurasia, Kazakhstan has another important advantage — it has a wise leadership that pursues a farsighted foreign policy. Considering all these factors, China has identified Kazakhstan as a key partner in the implementation of the Belt and Road projects.

The Belt and Road Initiative has significantly transformed and enlarged Chinese relations with Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries. Recent China-Central Asia Summit held in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, brought it up to the next level: within the framework of the 5+1 initiative, a mechanism for China's interaction with the entire region is being created and aligned with the region's integration trend.

Simultaneously with the Belt and Road Initiative, the government of Kazakhstan adopted the national industrialization program *Nurly Zhol*. One of the cornerstones of this program was a list of 56 priority projects for Kazakh-Chinese investment cooperation.

Despite the difficulties in the implementation of the projects, Kazakhstan still managed to shift the vector of China's investments toward the manufacturing industry. Through Kazakhstan's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese investments in the country have continued to grow and have reached around \$20 billion.

Kazakhstan has largely benefited from participation in the initiative through the increased share of investment in its manufacturing industry and the subsequent expanding of Kazakhstan's exports to Chinese market — from rolled metal and ore to agricultural products.

Through the Belt and Road Initiative and the mechanism of intergovernmental agreements, Kazakhstan effectively structured the flow of the investments. Out of the 56 Kazakh-Chinese priority projects, five are in the mechanical engineering sector (\$1.1 billion), 15 in the energy sector (\$2.4 billion on modernization of fuel and

energy facilities and projects in the field of green energy), 12 in the chemical industry (\$13.9 billion) and five in the food industry and agriculture.

It is expected that in cooperation with Chinese companies, Kazakh enterprises specialized in chemical, metallurgical, mining engineering, infrastructure, energy, agro-industrial complex, consumer goods industry, oil refining, production of construction materials and information technology industries will be modernized.

Kazakhstan's *Nurly Zhol* economy modernization program is aimed at creating new transport routes connecting Kazakh-

stan with major land and sea ports. High technology has significantly reduced the distance between Pacific ports and European countries along land corridors. Now it's a fait accompli. Transportation by land routes has reduced the travel time by almost half.

Kazakhstan's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative carries a number of key prospects, including the development of transport and industrial potential, and the solving of social problems.

Over the years of cooperation, three main routes for the transportation of goods have been identified: the northern route through

Kazakhstan and Russia, the middle route through Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus and the southern route through Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Transit traffic in the north is well-organized and has good infrastructure, but it is subject to geopolitical risks at the present time. Therefore, the next stage is the development of the alternative routes through the Caspian Sea and to the south of Central Asia.

A solid transport infrastructure has also been constructed — the Central Asia-China gas pipeline and the Kazakhstan-China oil

pipeline have been created with the technical and financial assistance of Chinese companies. Today, the railway network makes it possible for China to import most of the metals and ores mined in Central Asia.

The Belt and Road investments have also covered construction of railway and road infrastructure to provide transit routes to Europe and the supply of resources from Central Asia to China. Road infrastructure is also being created through joint efforts which has helped to increase the connectivity of the border regions of the Central Asian countries with China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. In this area, projects are implemented with the help of international grants (Kazakhstan's project Western Europe-Western China).

Following one of the objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese and Kazakh joint efforts on policy coordination have significantly contributed to the intensification of cooperation in new areas. Moreover, the governments of China and Kazakhstan are approaching a new stage — the transition from supporting individual projects to creating a stable ecosystem, with transparent and common rules for all investors.

Over the past 10 years, much has changed, both in Central Asia and in the entire Eurasia. There have been significant changes in the political situation and the socio-economic sphere of the countries of Central Asia. The international context is equally important.

Central Asian economies with a growing population need new drivers for economic growth and fresh incentives for sustainable development. Therefore, regional countries will continue to develop cooperation with China.

At the same time, Central Asia also means great opportunities for China. It offers natural resources not from distant seas, but across the land border, and new markets for investment by Chinese companies, including technological ones.

Ultimately, both China and Central Asian countries are interested in joint development. The current global turbulence is pushing both sides to cooperate more with each other. With a common destiny, they will have common success by working together.

The author is the director of the China Studies Center in Kazakhstan. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



YANG MEINI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY



Poetry rides new wave

Chinese youth are driving new forms of poetry, showing that its power and charm never get old,
Gui Qian reports.



I like to explore the musical characteristics of poetry and its connection with visual arts. Sometimes, images like camera shots pop into my mind first before I put them into poetry lines."

Liu Xiaochuan,
sculptor, kunqu performer and poet



I believe that there is always a corner in the world that contains poetry. I write wherever I go, and I compose whatever comes to my mind."

Gehuaren,
freelance poet



Do not repeat yourself, whether in language or content. And try to find your own voice — the genuine things you want to put in your poems."

Sirongyun,
freelance photographer and poet



Youngsters are looking for shelter from reality, so they look inward. Poetry in nature is the reflection of inner reality and the path through which one can shape it."

Zhou Yuchen,
postgraduate at King's College London and poet

Open mainstream Chinese social media and you might get the impression that poetry is making a comeback among the country's young generation.

Lifestyle-sharing platform Xiaohongshu has organized online activities such as "poems battle" and "poetry Renaissance". Poetry-related posts on the platform have reached more than 3 million and content with the hashtag "Xiaohongshu poetry alliance" has received 190 million views.

On the video-sharing website Bilibili, poetry societies have been setting up accounts, among which the Spark Society has gained over 132,000 followers; vloggers, including Youshan Xiansheng and "The Naive and Sentimental Novelist" have been calling for poetry reciting and poem submissions from literature lovers; and poems created by users in comment sections and bullet screens have led to the publication of a new chapbook called *I No Longer Work Hard to Become Someone Else: Writing Poetry on Bilibili*.

Whether in print or online, young people are reading, writing, engaging and pursuing poetry.

"For a while, poetry was in its low tide in China and poets were stigmatized. Now I'm happy to see poetry making a comeback, which affirms that poetry never dies as it always finds a way to keep its heart beating," said Zhou Yuchen, once a physics major at the University of Cambridge, UK, and now a postgraduate at King's College London.

Apart from writing poems, the 22-year-old has been promoting poetry among youth, as she was one of the founding members and the former vice president of the 00s Poets Society, which is made up of around 60 Chinese poets living around the world who were born post-2000.

The 00s Poets Society arranges poetry lectures and seminars, organizes an international poetry award to recognize outstanding poems in Chinese and other languages, and publishes annual selections of winning works.

Other poetry societies like Zhou's make up the landscape of the world of young Chinese poets. Their mainstays have long been domestic top universities' poetry clubs,

including those of Peking University, Fudan University and Wuhan University. But recent years have witnessed the thriving of folk societies such as the Jihe Society and Hangchuan Society. Overseas associations of young Chinese poets, like Accent Society, which is based in New York City, are also making waves in the multilingual and cross-cultural poetry scenes.

According to Zhou, these societies have established communities for poetry enthusiasts to communicate and grow their influence. She also thinks that the prevalence of poetry is connected to the pressure felt from study, work, finance or relationships that young people have to face nowadays.

"Youngsters are looking for shelter from reality, so they look inward. Poetry in nature is the reflection of inner reality and the path through which one can shape it," she explained. "For example, if you want to become happier and more confident, write a poem with positive images and read it aloud, and you may see real changes. This is the magic of poetry." Zhou says this is her philosophy of poetry and thinks it is that of many others, too, consciously or subconsciously.

In the world of the craft of poetry, the young generation is experimenting with language and showcasing a sense of innovation. By integrating computer languages, mathematic terms and financial expressions into poetic lines, poets with different backgrounds are taking poetry to various fields and drawing out new possibilities for the genre. "We young poets want to tame languages of different realms and write poems where poetry does not commonly appear," Zhou said.

Words on the streets

At a night market in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province, a subway station in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, or a beach in Qinhuangdao, Hebei province, you may find a stall set up by a twenty-something woman with a signboard that reads, "Improvised poems. Pay as you wish."

The woman goes by the nickname Gehuaren, who has made a name for herself on social media as a "street-stall poet". Back in 2020, when Gehuaren resigned from her job

at an advertising agency in Shanghai, she decided to do something fun. Having an interest in literature, she was struck by the idea of offering people a unique service of quickly writing poems based on themes of the customers' choice.

Her improvised poems are usually short, with just several lines. Once the poem has been completed, she refuses to make any edits, saying, "Poetry captures the fleeting moments in our lives and gives substance to our floating imagination."

Starting from Xishuangbanna, Gehuaren has been to several cities vending her poems, already selling several hundred of them. "Most of my customers are young people. I'm surprised that they are more than happy to walk up to me and ask about the 'strange goods' I'm selling. This shows poetry is quite accepted among the youth," she said.

"The feedback I often received about my poems are encouraging words like 'cute' and 'fulfilling'. For me, writing poems is entertainment rather than a job," she added.

To make the entertainment even more entertaining, Gehuaren then started two other poetry "experiments".

She is now cooperating with musicians to create poems that can be made into songs. She writes the lyrics while the bands compose the melodies and perform the songs. "I plan to work with 33 bands to bring in 33 works, each of which may be about an emotion, a social issue or maybe nothing at all," she said.

The other experiment is titled "Taking Poetry to the Streets", in which Gehuaren turns walls, windows, trash cans, delivery cars and almost everything in daily life into showcases of poetry. Of course, she doesn't write the poems directly on them. Instead, she took pictures and added her poems onto the images with her phone, making ordinary scenes poetic.

"I believe that there is always a corner in the world that contains poetry. I write wherever I go, and I compose whatever comes to my mind," she said.

Searching for authenticity

For artist Liu Xiaochuan, 24, who does sculptures and kunqu performances, poetry is another medium of art for her through

which she develops her interest in different cultures, explores the beauty of languages and connects to herself and others.

Growing up in Beijing, Liu went to the US to study Studio Art and French in 2017. In her university's poetry course, she started to read and write poems in English. At that time, she was struggling to adapt to the new environment and suffering from memory difficulties after a brain injury, so she put all her painful thoughts into her poems. The poems became more than homework — they were healing.

She dove into the sea of rhymes, forms and images of poems in a non-native language and pursued the authentic flavor of English poetry. She also attended many poetry readings, which are popular activities among poetry lovers in the West. In pubs and bookstores, where the events usually take place, poets recite their pieces in unique styles. Liu once met a poet who energetically rapped his works, as well as one who recited in a melancholy style as if he was singing the blues. As for Liu, her style is natural and sincere. "The events give me a sense of community and intimacy," she said.

From Liu's dedication comes a poetry chapbook of her own. Selected as the winner of the Jubilat Poetry Prize, her works were published by the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2019, titled *The Rye of Pondoring*.

After her book, Liu has kept on writing. For her, writing is a never-ending path and poetry is never a finished product. "As you live longer and think deeper, you can always make your poems richer and more accurate," she said. "I like to explore the musical characteristics of poetry and its connection with visual arts. Sometimes, images like camera shots pop into my mind first before I put them into poetry lines."

A piece titled *Unnamed Poem in Mourning* displays how she carefully crafts her phrases. Following her good friend's suicide, she couldn't help but think about death, and dark, cruel images kept coming into her head. So, she wrote, "Death. A piece of bad meat that the butcher threw into the trash. I am a stray dog. I approached it." Liu composed an over-1,000-word poem and called it "her

strongest effort in extending into and grasping the cherished beings in her memory".

Work in progress

Seven years ago, poet Sirongyun appeared in public view with his work *Young People, Please Bear With It*, which struck a chord with the youth and spread quickly online. One year later, he published a poetry collection with the same title, and at the end of last year he brought out his second official book *Cliff Rising After Meeting You*.

The poet from Jiangsu province started to write poems when he was a kid and has dedicated himself to the craft for over 15 years. In past years, he worked as a property manager as well as a staff member at an internet start-up and is now a freelancer engaging in photography and poetry-related work. For Sirongyun, now in his 30s, one thing that hasn't changed is writing poetry, which has accompanied him through days and nights of loneliness.

Poetry makes Sirongyun curious and look forward to the future. "I can't wait to see what kinds of poems I will create when I grow old," he said.

Earning his fame with a poem about youths' inner struggles, Sirongyun said he is now entering the next stage of his life, where he is more focused on looking outward.

He came to understand the relationship between poetry and our times. "Technology is changing the way authors create. Big data and automatic input methods offer us buzzwords of the era and high-frequency expressions of our own, so will you go with the flow? We all carry the same burden of what goes on in our world, but will you simply avoid referring to them in your works? Poetry records individual voices in a big era," he said.

Going through all these phases, Sirongyun has realized the things that matter to poets who commit themselves to long-standing creation — to constantly challenge and always stay true to themselves. His words of advice to young poets are clear. "Do not repeat yourself, whether in language or content. And try to find your own voice — the genuine things you want to put in your poems," he said.

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Z WEEKLY

Faraway letter brings dream closer for youth

Young Tsering from Tibet, who received a reply letter from the Shenzhou XV crew, has his sights set high.

By DAQIONG and PALDEN NYIMA in Lhasa

Before the Shenzhou XV crew returned to Earth after spending 186 days on China's space station, they sent a reply letter to Earth, and the recipient was Tsering Dargye.

Tsering, 16, a Tibetan youth, is from the Lhokha city of the Tibet autonomous region and is currently studying at the Beijing No 80 High School.

Tsering, enrolled by the school in 2021 for his strong academic performance, is one of the more than 10,000 people from various fields who sent letters to the crew, but he is the only one who received a reply.

"I was thrilled at first, and then, after calming down, I felt a lot of gratitude. I want to express my sincere thanks to the China Aerospace Network for providing the opportunity to write a letter to the astronauts far away in space," said Tsering.

In his letter, Tsering shared stories about listening to his grandfather tell Tibetan tales of the starry sky when he was a child, his dreams of learning about the sky through photography, and his experiences of moving from Tibet to Beijing to pursue better learning opportunities.

"The starry sky has always been a

“The starry sky has always been a dreamy and wonderful realm for me. In my hometown of Tibet, there are many legends about the starry sky.”

Tsering Dargye, 16, Tibetan youth and student at the Beijing No 80 High School

dreamy and wonderful realm for me. In my hometown of Tibet, there are many legends about the starry sky," he said.

In his letter, Tsering expressed his strong interest and yearning for the starry sky. He noted that in 2021, he moved from Tibet, the place on Earth closest to the sky, to study in Beijing, the place closest to the heart of China's aerospace industry.

He said by studying in Beijing, he has been able to make many new friends who also love aerospace. On the other hand, he has encountered some troubles and confusion while studying in a new environment.

The Shenzhou XV mission com-

mander Major General Fei Junlong is the astronaut who replied to Tsering's letter.

In his response, Fei offered words of encouragement to Tsering by sharing his own experiences.

"From space, we can see the vast plateau covered in snow all year round and the mountains looming faintly. I guess that's your hometown of Tibet, right?" noted Fei in his letter.

"As you wrote in your letter, the road to success is never smooth, and only by continuously working hard can dreams eventually come true," Fei wrote.

Fei encouraged Tsering and his classmates to become masters of whatever skill and field they pursue in the future, and he ended the letter by wishing success to Tsering and his classmates in their studies.

Tsering said as far as he knows, despite China's aerospace industry still facing some difficulties and setbacks, it maintains a leading position in the global aerospace industry.

"I've always been interested in the universe and space, but my interest in these areas is only at the level of a hobby," he said.

Tsering, who did his kindergarten and primary schooling in Lhasa, the capital city of the Tibet autonomous



Tsering Dargye delivers a speech at a ceremony welcoming new Tibetan students at the Beijing No 80 High School in February. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

region, said he was quite satisfied with the teaching quality and conditions of the schools there.

After I moved to inland cities to continue my elementary education, I found a certain gap in terms of teaching quality between the schools in Tibet and inland areas. However, the gap is narrowing every year, he said.

"Every year, when I go home, I visit my alma mater. I can see changes almost every time, which I hope will continue to be the case," he said.

While undertaking his elementary education in his hometown, he was working hard to fulfill his dream of doing part of his education in an inland city because, in his eyes, studying in an inland city means better education, broader horizons,

and more exploration of one's potential.

"Studying at Beijing No 80 High School was my dream, and I'm now living it," he said. Besides his school curricula, he enjoys photography, poetry, and music. He said he likes the school environment in Beijing and often chats with his classmates about topics such as information technology, music, and art.

"I think leaving home and studying in a new place can help us mature more as a person. We can improve our skills in things like communication, self-care, and self-control," he said.

"I think my biggest gain is a higher level of independent thinking, which I believe is very important for facing many things in life," he added.

Regarding the inheritance of Tibetan language and culture, Tsering said he and his Tibetan schoolmates run cultural activities regularly during their leisure time. These have included activities on Tibetan calligraphy, dancing and books, as well as the holding of a Tibetan cultural festival.

Tsering is now studying hard. He said during the coming summer holiday he plans to spend more time on his studies to make up for lost opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"My current dream is to learn computer science at Tsinghua University," said Tsering.

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A Swede in Beijing giving the greatest gift of all

Am I prouder of the 41st or the first? Hard to say. We'll get to that in a bit.

Of one thing I am sure — I was definitely out of my comfort zone at that moment. There I was squinting against the intense camera flash, a giant needle sticking out of my vein, sucking blood into the centrifuge, and trying to answer interview questions in my third language — Mandarin Chinese. As a teacher, how often have I not parroted the phrase "You need to step out of your comfort zone"? I hope some of my students will see that, at least occasionally, I do walk the talk.

In reality, it was a tremendous honor to be in that situation. Being interviewed by the Red Cross on June 3 for earning a gold medal for donating blood platelets 41 times in Beijing has given me a great sense of pride. Hopefully, my story can help inspire others to find their local blood bank and contribute to a stable public blood supply. With me that day, I had one of my students Han Xufeng, an English major at Beijing Union University. He completed his first donation right beside me. Honestly, I can't say if I was prouder of my 41st donation or being a part of his first foray into this world.

One blood donation could save three lives, and in China, a donor

can donate every six months. Later on, I learned that you can also opt to only donate blood platelets. These are needed by many cancer patients; one unit gives the recipient at least another 24 hours to live, while doctors find ways to treat their diseases. Unfortunately, blood cannot be made artificially and is very perishable, so there is always more need than supply. In other words, when we need it, we have to rely on strangers to volunteer their blood. Meanwhile, securing an adequate blood supply requires tremendous social coordination.

Unfortunately, we seldom appreciate enough how difficult it is to achieve this coordinated social action. The difficulty often lies in the fact that it can be so tempting for individuals to act in their narrow self-interest instead of doing what is best for society. This was one of many valuable lessons that my professors at the University of International Business and Economics imparted to me. In Game Theory, this is known as the "free rider" problem. In the case of blood donations, many people don't realize that choosing not to donate means you are free-riding the system. We all expect blood to be available when we need it. However, an adequate blood supply can only be guaranteed if enough healthy people take

the time out of their busy lives to visit the local blood bank and bear the slight pain of a needle puncturing the skin.

The Chinese government has created an ingenious incentive system to promote the socially responsible act of donating blood. Donors benefit from free access to blood if they need it in the future. This coverage also covers next of kin, so every donation is, in effect, an investment in your whole family's future health. It is often forgotten that every donor is screened for blood-related infectious diseases, which means a successful donation is also a badge of health. In addition, donors also get a travel reimbursement, a nice lunch, a redeemable gift voucher, and a chance to earn bronze, silver, or gold medals of recognition from the Beijing municipal government.

At the outset of the pandemic, I was lucky enough to get to know a group of dedicated donors. These people refuse to be free riders and go above and beyond the call of duty. Take Mr Jin Yongli as an example. He apologizes for being too busy these days, so he hasn't been able to add to his list of over 70 successful donations. Compared to him, my tally of 41 seems rather insignificant. But still, I feel an undeniable sense of achievement for meeting the blood donor gold medal criteria.

Dedicated long-term donors like Mr Jin ensure a reliable blood supply for you and me if needed. The government has done its part to ensure a safe and rewarding donation system that benefits your family. Now it is up to us to educate ourselves, draw inspiration from the spirit of dedicated donors, and take positive action instead of taking the free ride.

Thomas Karlsson, PhD, is a 45-year-old Swedish citizen and Chinese green card holder. He is passionate about China, charity, teaching, family, and lifelong learning. He is a teacher at Beijing Union University, which he sees as his second home.



Thomas Karlsson donates blood at a blood donation center in Beijing on June 3, marking his 41st blood donation in China. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

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Z WEEKLY

Editor's note: It's graduation season once again. A new batch of graduates is preparing to step out of the ivory tower and into the real world. How is their job hunting going? Is it better to follow your heart or just take any job that comes your way? Does leaving school spell the end of learning? We interviewed some professors and graduates to find out.

Good job, graduates

Decision-making time has arrived for millions of students across the country as they prepare to leave the campus and enter the job market, **Chen Xue** and **Wang Xingwei** report.



Zhou Yifan (third from left) takes a picture together with his school friends before their performance at the graduation gala on June 11. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Wu Minsu, professor
Doctoral adviser of the Television School,
Communication University of China

Although it was said that this year was going to be a difficult one for new graduate student job hunting — the first one since the end of the pandemic — Wu said her students seem to be having no trouble navigating the job market. But she did notice that their choices were slightly different from those of their predecessors.

They care less about what previous graduates might think of as “staples” — things like the Beijing hukou, or household registration status. “For them, a job that offers hukou is not as appealing as a job that pays

well,” said Wu.

Also, while previous college graduates in Beijing tended to stay in the city for work, this year's graduates are more willing to look elsewhere and find job opportunities in, for example, the Yangtze River Delta city cluster, including Shanghai and Nanjing, as well as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Some are also choosing to go back to their hometowns.

Wu believes the reason that her students stand out in the job markets is due to their versatility — international journalism and communication majors have strong English-language skills alongside video filming and editing skills. The video projects they took part in on a daily basis were not small class assignments but key projects organized by the Television School on a state level.

“Students have already engaged in important media work while at school, which means they don't need any extra time to adjust from textbooks to jobs — they can start working right after graduation,” said Wu.

For graduates who are hesitant to settle on a job — either because they think it's not

good enough for them or it's not what they truly like — Wu always tells them that they should first just aim to get a job, then to choose a job and then to create a job.

“You simply need a job — any job — so you can be financially independent and not living off your parents anymore. After a few years of experience, you'll have more job options — being able to choose a job that you really like. And eventually, when you accumulate enough resources, both financially and skill-wise, you could even start your own business,” said Wu.



Yu Runsheng, professor
Party secretary of the School of Humanities,
Central Academy of Fine Arts

There is a wide range when it comes to fine arts majors — oil painting, traditional Chinese painting, design, architecture, sculpture, and art history, just to name a few — so the choices of graduates are diverse, said Yu. They either become full-time artists, enter research centers, teach in high schools or colleges, or do design work for technology and internet companies.

“With the advancement of people's material lives, they have higher requirements for cultural and art products, and they are more aware of the importance of aesthetic education and creative design,” said Yu.

Just like graduates of other majors, art students also tend to work in bigger cities such as Beijing or those in eastern China's coastal areas as they believe these cities hold the country's majority of art resources, such as art markets, museums and galleries. But Yu said graduates should change their mindsets and also consider less developed areas in middle and western China. Not only have modern transportation and the internet greatly narrowed the gap between these areas and big cities, but they might also be home to different kinds of art resources.

“Many remote areas have their unique

local traditions and cultural heritages that are worth exploring. These are valuable resources for art students,” said Yu. “Also, life in big cities can be stressful, which isn't ideal when it comes to jobs requiring creativity. The relaxing and tranquil environment of small towns can help give artists inspiration.”

But graduating from college and landing a job is no guarantee of a fruitful life. Yu said that with artificial intelligence developing the ability to replace human labor, especially for repetitive types of work, art students — and perhaps all students — shouldn't just settle for basic-level jobs.

“The core value of human beings is their unrestrained imagination and creativity,” said Yu. “That's what can't be replaced.”

And to make sure that they don't lose their creativity, Yu recommends that graduates always keep a curious mindset and pursue lifelong learning.

“Only if you are constantly curious will you keep exploring outward to the outside world and inward to your inner self,” Yu said. “And only if we keep learning can we avoid becoming slaves to technology and instead be the real owners of our future.”

Zhang Qianyu

Renmin University of China, Beijing



China and is ready to don the red graduation gown.

But this graduation season is a bit different for her. Unlike previous ones, during which Zhang would bid a happy farewell to her classmates, anticipating her next stage of studies, this time she feels excited but also anxious because her next adventure will be out in society — the real world.

“I will miss this ivory tower where I could dig into my international studies major without any distractions,” said Zhang. After graduation, she will need to deal with many new life matters, such as finding a place to live. “Even though I have a doctorate, when it comes to social skills, I think I'm still a freshman.”

This is why Zhang and her peers have been preparing for this moment for a little while now. They have been spending more time with each other — get-togethers that these international studies majors fittingly call “table diplomacy” — during which they catch up on all the latest happenings in each other's lives and discuss their “personal

development issues”.

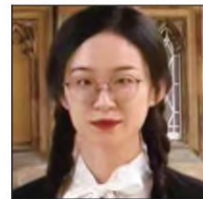
“One of our common concerns in the final year is whether our job offers are really suitable for us,” Zhang said. “Fearing regret, some of my peers have been hesitant to make career choices.”

As for Zhang, she has decided to work as a researcher in a scientific institution, continuing her work on international political economy. It was an easy choice for her since she believes that no matter what job you choose, everything will work out for the best as long as you follow your heart and do something you're passionate about and good at.

“Everything in life happens according to a certain timing, like a clock. And everyone has his or her own path to go down,” said Zhang.

Bao Yu

University of Cambridge, UK



University of Cambridge, Bao still remembers the special moments after the commencement ceremony in November 2022. The graduates were dressed in the school's traditional black gown and joined a procession around the town. Many local people

Bao, 23, is working at an international school in Beijing, a career she never imagined she would have.

As a recent graduate of the University of Cambridge, Bao still remembers the special moments after the commencement ceremony in November 2022. The graduates were dressed in the school's traditional black gown and joined a procession around the town. Many local people

lined the streets and clapped as the procession went by. “It felt like a scene from a *Harry Potter* movie,” she said.

Bao had aspired to study at Cambridge since childhood and completing a one-year postgraduate program there felt like a dream come true for her. But after graduation, she felt uneasy. “I had no idea what my next goal was and what to do next,” she said.

In fact, she was offered a place in a PhD program at Cambridge, which in many people's eyes would be an unmissable opportunity, but not to Bao. “I don't think I have a lifelong passion for academia, even though I was nicknamed ‘Scholar Bao’ by my peers at school,” she said.

Fortunately, in what she calls “the toughest days” of her life, she was given an opportunity to take a job in the education sector back in China, which, she said, gave her direction.

Together with her team, Bao now provides admission counseling to around 200 high school students. In her daily interactions with these teens, Bao says she can see herself in them — they have similar thoughts, motivations and confusions as her younger self. Therefore, Bao hopes to make good use of her experiences to help them plan their futures and spare them from unnecessary twists and turns like those that she went through.

“I'm gratified to find that my students are making progress after taking my suggestions,” she said.

Recalling her school days, Bao recognizes her courage to chase her dream. “I believe where there's a will, there's a way. But more

importantly, you've got to find out what you want, and keep it in mind when making decisions,” she said.

And right now, she's certain that being an educator is exactly what she wants.

Zhou Yifan

University of International Business and Economics, Beijing



Growing up in a Chinese-Italian family in Italy, Zhou, 22, has always been fascinated by the idea of studying in China. So when an opportunity presented itself four years ago, he went for it.

Zhou is now a senior majoring in international business at the University of International Business and Economics. During the past four years, he has explored China and met many local people, as well as enjoyed the colorful campus life and opportunities, including being a volunteer for the Beijing Winter Olympics.

As a Gen Zer active on social media, he is also a vlogger, recording stories about his life in China.

“Raised in a cross-cultural background, I can understand many Chinese ideas and express them in Western ways. So it seems fitting for me to bridge the gap between China and Western countries,” said Zhou.

As graduation season approaches, Zhou is busy taking part in many campus activities, including the graduation gala. He is very much looking forward to the moment when the dean turns the tassel on his cap at the graduation ceremony.

“These will be unique memories for me in China, which I have never experienced before,” said Zhou.

While enjoying the excitement of graduation, he is also fully aware that it's time to think about his future.

Born into a family of businesspeople, Zhou developed an interest in commerce from a young age. When it comes to his career, Zhou's parents hope that he can get a stable and decent job in the commercial industry. But Zhou would rather start his own business trading across borders.

“I know there will be a lot of pressure in running my own company, but as long as I learn and grow, I'm willing to take on the heavy workload,” he said.

Thanks to the part-time internships that Zhou did in his school days, he believes that the transition from campus to society will be easier for him than most graduates. But he also admitted that it might take him some time to put what he has learned from textbooks into practice.

“I think academic achievements and social experiences like internships are equally important in college as the latter really helps with your personal growth,” Zhou said.

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